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- Why even the best hospitals can kill you
- We need a new Marx!
- Tom Braden on the new CIA
- Marjorie Williams on journalism's female trouble; Evan Thomas on John J. McCloy; and Jay McInerney on why we're all so selfish

The Washington Monthly

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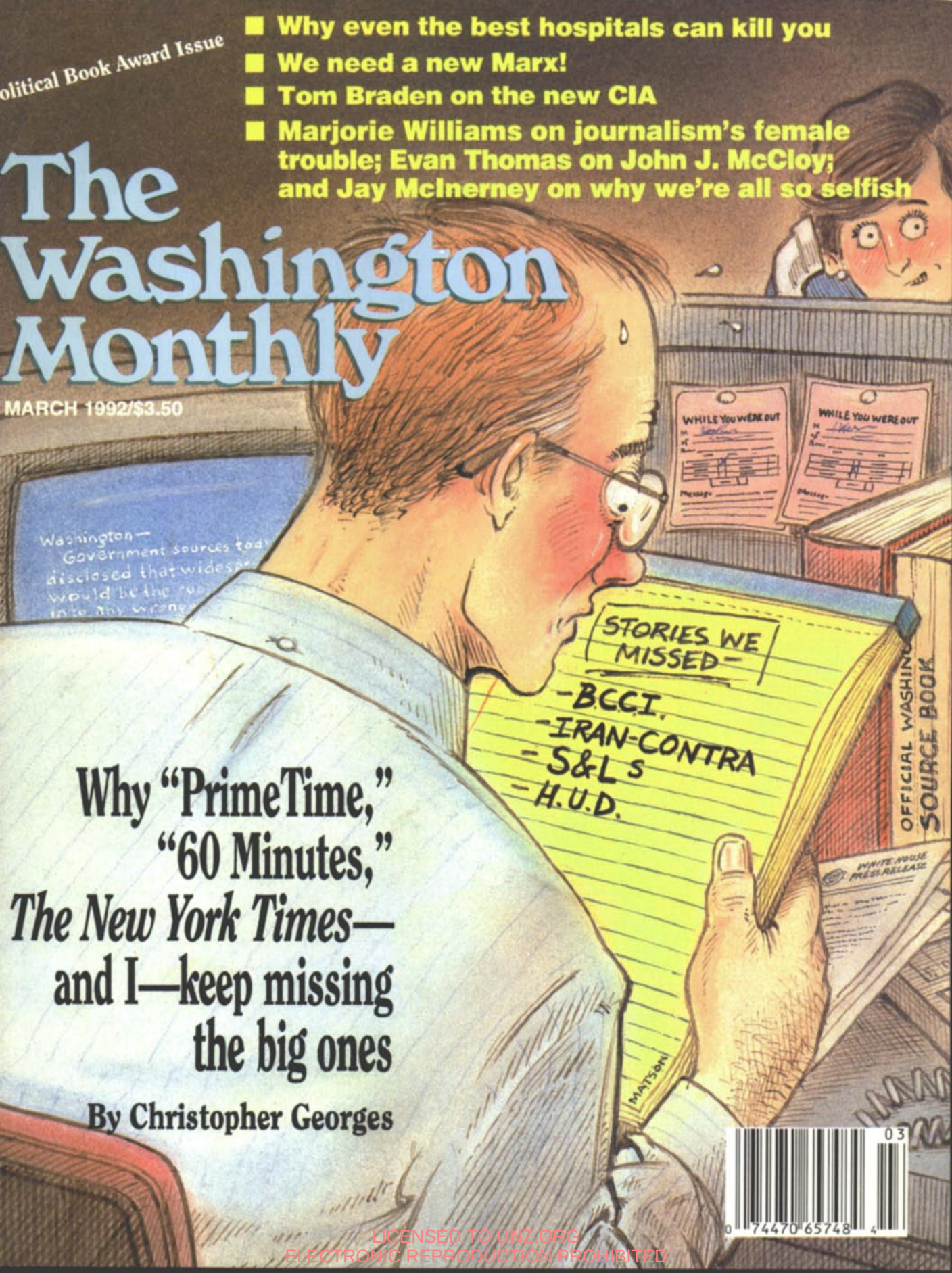

Why "PrimeTime," "60 Minutes," *The New York Times*— and I—keep missing the big ones

By Christopher Georges

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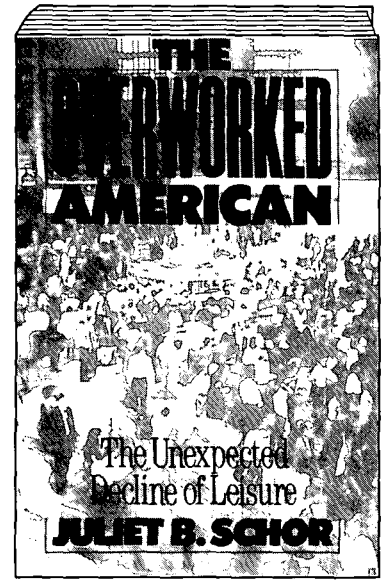

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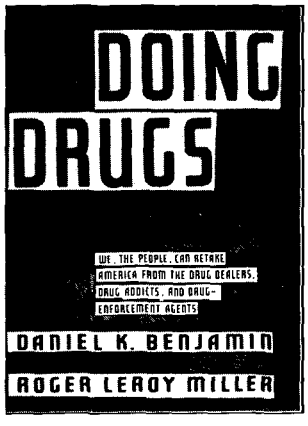

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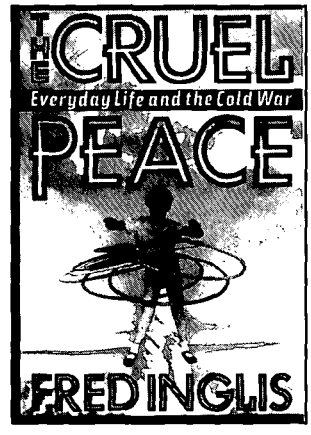

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LETTERS

Boos and kudos

Katherine Boo's "The Organization Woman" [December] left me as outraged as the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings themselves. Boo's history is clearly not that of most of us.

LYNN OLSON
Lynnwood, Washington

Regarding "The Organization Woman": Right on! You got it right, the first time, all the way. Excellent.

BURYL B. NOAH
Winchester, Virginia

Mintz meat

Morton Mintz's attack on Johnson & Johnson ["Drug Fiends," December] is a predictable anti-corporate diatribe. I know we will never convince him that we acted responsibly in all the instances he cited, and we won't attempt to refute or correct any of his numerous arguments and assertions.

But I will not leave unchallenged the vicious personal attack on Jim Burke, my predecessor as chairman of Johnson & Johnson. He is indeed, as the article noted, one of the most admired executives in the country. And with good reason: He is a man of extraordinary integrity, and his leadership of Johnson & Johnson set new standards for corporate responsibility.

It is sad that Mintz felt the need to try to tarnish one of this country's most remarkable business leaders. He did not succeed.

RALPH S. LARSON
New Brunswick, New Jersey
Mr. Larson is chairman and chief executive officer of Johnson & Johnson.

Vital statistics

Perhaps Charles Peters felt that his meaning was self-evident when he called "depressing" the fact that no American Jews died in the Persian Gulf war [Tilting at Windmills, December]. But with Pat Buchanan and David Duke running for president, it would be best if Peters made his case for equity among the classes with greater rigor. I, for one, am perplexed by Peters's comment, especially since he and *The Washington Monthly* vigorously—and appropriately—opposed the war with Iraq. Had the statistically correct number of American Jews died in the Gulf—by my estimate 10 or 11—Peters, I trust, would not have called the fact "encouraging."

DAVE GELLMAN
Evanston, Illinois

Praising Cain

I was disappointed to see that the *Monthly*, of all places, was so grudging about the merits of Tina Rosenberg's book, *Children of Cain* ["Brothers in Arms," James LeMoyne, November]. Maybe the book isn't perfect, and no doubt I am biased because Tina is a friend. But in writing this book she displayed two kinds of bravery that the *Monthly* has often called for from journalists. She showed physical bravery by putting herself in the middle of difficult situations in violent societies, and even more she showed intellectual bravery and independence by looking for explanations of why Latin American society works the way it does. I wish the magazine would have applauded the attempt, even if it disagreed with the execution.

JAMES M. FALLOWS
Washington, D.C.

The editor replies:

You're right. We should have. Please see the Political Book Awards on page 44.

Sticks and Stokes

Geoffrey Stokes' review of my book *The Media Show* [Political Booknotes, November] tells readers that my book doesn't deliver the goods. He's entitled, as we no longer say in New York. But as "evidence" for my book's alleged shortcomings, he cites a throwaway line of mine about George Steinbrenner (the ex-Yankees owner), who is so peripheral to my book that he's beyond the left-field fences. I had remarked that Steinbrenner was among those bloated figures who rise, like hot air balloons, beyond the pull of media opinion. Vermonter Stokes hoots at my "misreading" of the New York mood: The fans hate Steinbrenner, Stokes says.

The front page of the *Daily News* from January 20 reads: "Wanted: State Urges Baseball Commish to Bring Back The Boss."

If Stokes were pitching for the Yanks, George would have him outta there.

EDWIN DIAMOND
New York, New York

Non-prophet

David Shenk's article ["Nonprofiteers," December] contains statements concerning The Conservative Caucus (TCC) and The Conservative Caucus Research, Analysis, and Education Foundation (TCCRAEF) that are both false and misleading.

Howard Phillips founded TCC in 1974. Although he enlisted the support of Senator Jesse Helms and others, the

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organization was not founded at the instigation of Helms and members of his staff, as Shenk claims.

Shenk inaccurately asserts that TCCRAEF and TCC have a relationship in which TCCRAEF pays a disproportionately large share of salaries, compared to its share of the income. However, TCCRAEF's tax return (which was given to Shenk) points out that TCC reimburses TCCRAEF for any time spent by its employees working on TCC business. This requirement is scrupulously observed. Because TCC's volume of direct mail is much larger than that of TCCRAEF, its ratio of salaries to expenses is naturally lower. TCC's postage costs, for example, are more than 24 times greater than those of TCCRAEF. In addition, TCCRAEF uses its own salaried employees for most of its direct mail, while TCC contracts with outside agencies whose costs are not counted as salaries.

Shenk's analysis puts forward a grossly inflated figure for Mr. Phillips's "regular" salary, completely ignoring the fact (which was noted on the financial information we provided to Shenk) that payments to Phillips for the period in question included part of a previous year's salary that had not been paid on time. There follows a reference to "one fundraising event" that was actually a six-month direct mail campaign.

The general accusation leveled by Shenk, that tax-deductible dollars are being used for lobbying purposes, is a serious one, but certainly not applicable to TCC and TCCRAEF. TCCRAEF exists for the purpose of research and education.

All grassroots lobbying and other efforts to influence Congress are carried out by TCC, using donations that are not deductible. The mere fact that the TCC budget is usually about five times larger than the TCCRAEF budget shows that people are willing to give to an action organization, even if it means sacrificing the tax deduction. If the accusations of laundering money through tax-deductible foundations were correct, we would expect to see those foundations receiving the lion's share of the donations.

CHARLES ORNDORFF
Vienna, Virginia
Mr. Orndorff is administrative vice chairman of The Conservative Caucus.

The author replies:

It's true that I did not give a detailed history of the founding of The Conservative Caucus. But I didn't give a lot of irrelevant details. I believe my summary of the Caucus's origins was accurate. The article states that "Helms and his associates . . . set up a series of fundraising and lobbying groups," including The Conservative Caucus. Howard Phillips was then and is now a close associate of Jesse Helms.

On the question of disproportionate payment, I never asserted that payments were out of proportion to the work done. True, they looked wildly disproportionate on the forms I was given. But that section of the article clearly states, "It is entirely conceivable that all of the payments are being made in proportion to the work carried out." The problem is that the arrangements are, as reported on the tax forms, "vague." Again, as the article stated: "Inherent in the current system of legally sanctioned twin organizations [501(c)3s and 501(c)4s] is the virtual assurance that the truth about millions of financial transactions will never be known." The point of my article is that the letter of the law is not very scrupulous. The fact is, twin organizations that are not scrupulous need not worry about being caught.

The "one fundraising event" referred to in the article was simply a lifting of how the campaign was designated on the tax forms.

I should add that Mr. Orndorff hints in his letter of having turned over to me a volume of complete and self-explanatory records. In fact, the forms the caucus made available to me were not the ones I asked to see, as allowed and required under the law. For TCCRAEF, officials did indeed furnish me with the appropriate "990" form. For TCC, however, I was given only a "New York State Department of State Annual Financial Report."

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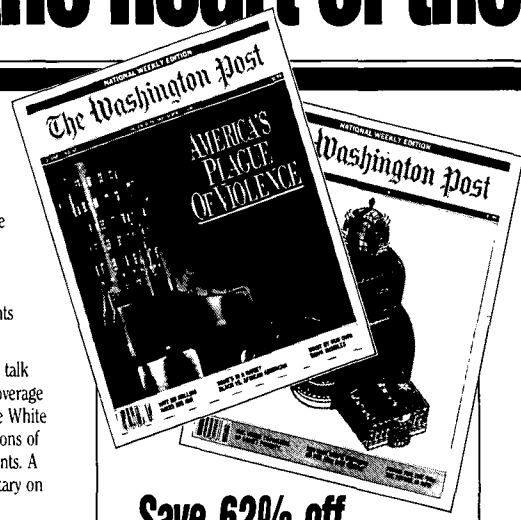

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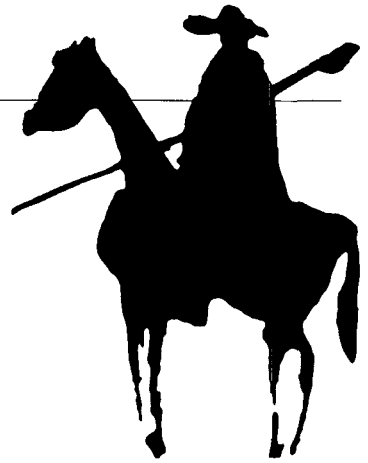

Keeping the family together isn't always best, Lois Forer wrote a few years back ["Bring Back the Orphanage," April 1988], arguing that children might sometimes be better off in a foster home or even in a decently run orphanage than if left in the care of their natural parents. A recent case from Buffalo, New York, illustrates Forer's point.

Bruce Kuhn was convicted of raping a 13-year-old girl—a rape he videotaped and then showed to his two sons, aged eight and eleven. He was sentenced to just eight weekends in jail because he was the only family member available to care for the boys. . . .

Practically everyone who has ever worked, as I once did, in an agency having anything to do with national security or foreign affairs has a strong suspicion that there are a lot of classified documents that contain information the government has no legitimate reason for keeping secret. Knight-Ridder's Tim Weiner recently found a file in the National Archives that suggests the suspicion is not unwarranted. It is stamped "Confidential" and kept under lock and key. Its subject: U.S. troops in Europe. Its date: April 15, 1917. . . .

Senator Robert Byrd has been ridiculed for seeking to transfer parts of the CIA, FBI, and other government agencies to West Virginia. It may be going a bit too far to move the White House to Wheeling, but I applaud the idea of getting federal agencies out of Washington and spreading them around the rest of the country. This gives bureaucrats a chance to meet some real people and get a first-hand feel for the problems the government is supposed to be dealing with.

One fact that federal civil servants might learn is how generously they are paid compared to most people. They may have gotten a glimpse when they read that Gennifer Flowers was making only $17,000 as a state employee in Arkansas and that Bill Clinton was getting only $35,000 as governor. The fact is that the average American earns less than $28,000 while the average civil servant in Washington gets more than $42,000. In the upper levels of the bureaucracy, members of the Senior Executive Service make as much as $112,000 and get such generous perquisites as the right to retire as early as age 55 and to shelter up to $13,000 a year from taxes. . . .

Because Jerry Brown is such a strange bird, the press has far too cavalierly dismissed his crusade against big money in politics. I think his $100 limit on contributions and the 800 telephone number he offers are inspired. Although on most issues Paul Tsongas has won the tell-it-like-it-is prize, Brown is the clear victor on the money issue. . . .

I hope my conservative friends noted the conclusion of a long article on the Canadian health insurance plan that appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* on December 3: "Canadians are almost universally devoted to universal health insurance." It's time for conservatives to face the truth on this issue. Liberals are more inclined to believe in health care for all, but too many liberal politicians are still afraid of offending the American Medical Association. On the health-care issue, Bob Kerrey, who supports a Canada-style program, wins the campaign's candor award. . . .

Kerrey, by the way, is also the only candidate who favors the kind of radical surgery on the bureaucracy that the *Monthly* has advocated for two decades. That there is indeed some fat in Washington is suggested by two recent news items.

Associated Press disclosed that a federal pipeline inspector had been earning more than $100,000 a year even though the pipeline he was supposed to inspect had not been built.

And Knight-Ridder's Frank Greve quoted a worker at the

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Department of Labor's Division of Industrial Relations Analysis who described how employees spend their days: "You walk up and down the corridor and drink coffee, you're on the phone to your friends. You read the paper." . . .

Government at all levels should start the kind of slimming down that has been taking place in corporate America. During the eighties, the District of Columbia bureaucracy increased by 20 percent even though the city's population shrank by 5 percent. In New York City, the record in the last decade is similar—a 25 percent increase in the number of bureaucrats with only a 3.5 percent increase in population. . . .

Do you know who the Welfare Cowboys are? They are cattlemen who are allowed to pay far less to graze their animals on federal land than they would have to pay to rent private property for grazing. Their leader, Alan Day, brother of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, is fighting an effort led by Democratic congressman Mike Synar to require ranchers to pay market prices. Synar, like Day, is a cattleman, but he is willing to compete in the market without government help. Day, on the other hand, is the kind of conservative for whom a special place in hell should be reserved. They scorn public assistance for everyone else but are deeply moved by the plight of their own special interest group. . . .

The ineptitude of school administrators is one of the great scandals of American public education. So is the administrators' excessive compensation in comparison to teachers. For example, in one Montana school district last year the average pay increase for teachers was $23, while the average administrator's raise was $1,500. . . .

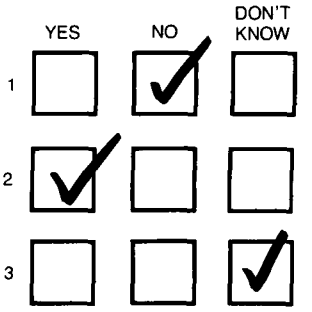
Should we let the lawyers escape this month? I hear your pleas of "No, no," imploring me to suppress my normally gentle instincts so that the scoundrels can be thoroughly savaged with as many twists of the knife as I can manage.

So let's start with the Virginia State Bar. Guess where it's holding its summer Continuing Legal Education Seminar this year? Perhaps Charlottesville, Richmond, or Norfolk? Or Roanoke, Danville, or Lynchburg? Or even a bit of a lark at Virginia Beach? (All together now) *Of course not.* These Virginia lawyers are going to Cambridge, England. And what will they discuss? Legal ethics! I'm not kidding. But you can be sure they won't discuss the ethics of sticking the rest of us with a large share of the bill through the tax deductability of the trip. . . .

And from Florida, we have a colleague's description of William Kennedy Smith's lawyer, Roy Black: "Roy represents people who can afford him. You're basically innocent until proven broke."

In the Smith case, there was one notable departure from the customarily abysmal standards of the bar: Judge Mary E. Lupo did work hard, keeping her court in session from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. with short lunch hours. Most judges prefer 9:30 to 4:30 with 90-minute lunch breaks, and there are more 10-to-4ers than there are Lupos.

Still, Judge Lupo displayed the bench's fundamental flaw: excessive sympathy for the



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arguments of counsel for the well-heeled. Although I can understand why the judge was less than captivated by Moira Lasch's icy incompetence, Lupo should not have allowed herself to be conned by the warmer, cleverer Black. As practically everyone who followed the trial understands, Lupo threw the case to Black when she barred the testimony of three other victims of Smith because their cases were not "strikingly similar" to Patricia Bowman's.

The prosecutor argued that there were plenty of similarities: The three victims and Bowman were all brunettes Smith met while they were unescorted in a social setting. All four said he initially struck them as a nice man until he got them onto his turf, where a Jekyll-and-Hyde change occurred in his personality and he forced himself on them.

Here are the dissimilarities that Black persuaded Lupo were significant enough to ban the three victims' testimony.

➤The earlier episodes had occurred indoors.

➤The other women had not been kissed first.

➤The other women said Smith had been drinking.

➤Smith's degree of undress differed in each account.

➤He got further with some than with others.

➤He didn't jump on them all in the same way.

None of these distinctions strikes me as even marginally significant. If you disagree, please write. . . .

The preceding items do not mean I scorn all lawyers. A few are marvelous men and women dedicated to the pursuit of freedom, justice, and fair play. A somewhat larger group—still, alas, a minority—consists not of crusaders but of thoroughly decent and reasonable people to whom you would naturally turn for advice in a dispute. I can imagine many of the latter group wanting to say to me when I tell them of a problem I'm having with some other fellow, "Why don't you just talk it over with him. You're both good guys. I'm sure you can work it out together."

The problem is that they are forbidden to do this by a majority of their colleagues who don't want to risk losing a fee for themselves or their buddies at the bar.

According to Formal Opinion No. 1991–2 of the Committee on Professional and Judicial Ethics of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York:

"A lawyer may not advise or encourage a client to approach a represented party directly." In other words, the greatest sin of all is to take bread out of the mouth of a fellow attorney. . . .

Rowan Scarborough of *The Washington Times* reports that a second U.S. Army study of the service's role in the Persian Gulf war was commissioned after the first one was declared too negative by General Gordon Sullivan. A Pentagon spokesman noted that the purpose of the first version "was to tell it like it is." The second, presumably, will tell it like it isn't. . . .

Most outsiders think federal civil servants are selected and promoted on the basis of rigorous written examinations. This is often not the case, especially in mid- and upper-level jobs where eligibility is determined by an evaluation of your credentials. If they fit the job description of the position you seek, you are placed on a list of eligibles. It then helps if you have a friend in the agency who will pick your name from the list. It also helps if the friend wrote the job description with your credentials in mind. This is called the buddy system, and it has played a far greater role than political patronage in determining the composition of the civil service.

One thing you'd think the government would test for sure is your typing ability, if the job calls for typing skill. Not necessarily. Agencies can permit applicants to self-certify on their 171 form. Some cynics say that a supervisor is most likely to approve the self-certification on a 171 for applicants who are 36–24–36. . . .

If you read John R. MacArthur's op-ed piece in *The New York Times* revealing the phony testimony engineered by the public relations firm Hill & Knowlton concerning the incubator babies in Kuwait, you probably assumed that the story wouldn't enhance the firm's reputation. Well, assume again. "The Los Angeles office of Hill & Knowlton, Inc.," reports the *Los Angeles Business Journal*, "appears to be benefiting from recent publicity about the company's controversial, prewar public relations campaign for Citizens for Free Kuwait."

This reminds me of the time that an acquaintance who wanted a divorce from his wife called to ask me to recommend a lawyer. "I don't want one of those nice, reasonable guys who will tell me I have to understand my wife's side of the story. I want a real shark I can count on to take my side regardless of what she says." . . .

It is a sad truth that *Monthly* causes do not always win widespread acceptance. The New Idealism we proclaimed in March 1980 sank without a trace in the Reagan years. Our proposals to draft the rich and take away their social security have not been

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adopted even though we've been recommending them for 20 years or so. But Cheap Chic is another matter. We proposed it in June 1990. Quickly picked up by *Time*, the term soon began to appear in other publications. Last fall, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* devoted a cover story to it. A January 27 headline in *The Washington Times* read: "Extravagance Loses Allure; Thriftiness is Back in Vogue." Twelve days earlier *The New York Times* ran a long article entitled "For the Nineties, Lavish Amounts of Stinginess," which noted:

"Advertising agencies, newsletters, and New Age visionaries are promoting the joys of the simple life, cheap chic, and fashionable frugality. Even Donald Trump, according to *Adweek*, shops at K-mart." . . .

Don't think we claim exclusive or even a major share of the credit for the triumph of Cheap Chic. Obviously, the recession is the main cause.

The recession may also be a major factor in finally bringing about the explosion of entrepreneurship that the *Monthly* has so long promoted. I hope the people losing their jobs will think about starting their own businesses. And past experience provides a solid basis for this hope.

"Historically, there has been a greater number of new business startups during depressions and recessions," write Thomas Burdick and Charlene Mitchell in *The Washington Times*. "Much of the entrepreneurial stimulation comes from outright desperation, as out-of-work people realize they have no alternatives."

The key is to turn this desperation into what professor Zenas Block of New York University's Center for Entrepreneurial Studies calls "creative dissatisfaction."

"You can howl at the moon about how bad things are, but you can also look at the world and say, how can this be better and what can I do about it?"

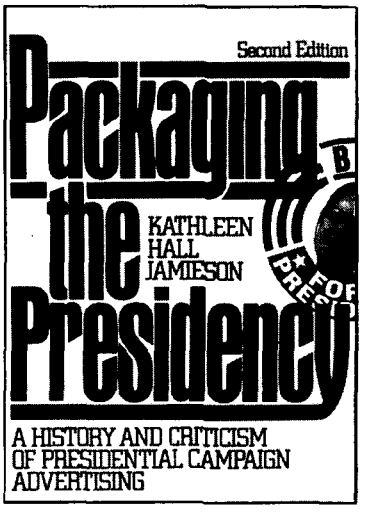
Identify a need for a product or service that is not being met and try to fill it. If you need capital, I have a suggestion from my own experience. Get a home equity loan—it used to be called a second mortgage—on your house. This possibility isn't open to everyone, but I suspect it is to a very large percentage of the middle-level managers who are losing their jobs in the current wave of downsizing. Your own money may be enough to get you started. But more often, what putting up some of your own funds does is help attract other potential investors by convincing them that you're really committed. . . .

One reason cable television companies get away with increasing your fees is that they don't hesitate to play hardball with local officials who stand up for the public interest. An executive of TCI, the nation's largest cable operator, was quoted by *The Washington Post* as telling one such official:

"We know where you live, where your office is, and who you owe money to. . . . We are having your house watched and we are going to use this information to destroy you. You made a big mistake messing with TCI. We are the largest cable company around." . . .

If the franking privilege is given to congressmen solely to allow them to communicate with their constituents, as many of them claim, why are members allowed to use it to send mail outside their

Doing whatever it takes to win.



Political advertising reached its nadir with Bush's Willie Horton campaign in 1988. Indeed, his negative approach became a campaign issue itself. What will 1992 bring? In this revised edition of a now classic study of campaign advertising, Jamieson examines all of the mudslinging, the soundbites, and the flag-draped politicians to provide an essential guide to what promises to be a particularly media-centered election year.

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present district but within the redrawn boundaries of the district where they are seeking reelection? The only use of the frank in these cases is to send the new people literature that will persuade them to vote for the congressman. . . .

In January, members of Congress got a $4,400 pay raise. There was little publicity because it was an automatic cost-of-living adjustment, which they will continue to get for years on end. Such COLAs are common in many organizations, but they don't make sense. If you hire a clerk at $20,000 a year, it won't be long until he is making $30,000 as a result of COLAs and other automatic and semi-automatic raises such as the government's "step" increases. Of course, it doesn't make sense to pay a clerk $30,000. Yet many organizations are doing so because of these annual increases. Another problem is that the automatic raises for employees whose salaries shouldn't be increased uses up money that should go for other purposes, such as larger salaries for the truly outstanding or money to hire additional clerks who are needed to take care of the people standing in line. . . .

The Candidate's Wife, a highly readable new political novel by Patricia O'Brien, makes a case for pro-choice that is on the whole persuasive but also shows the absurd extremes to which the argument can be carried. The heroine tells her husband that if she hadn't had an abortion just after the couple graduated from college, "It would have meant you giving up law school. It would have ruined your life." There is not a hint of awareness that her educated, capable husband might have been better off without the tedium or moral marginality of the typical law practice. . .

As you know, doctors are just as guilty as lawyers in the matter of fraudulent tax deductions taken under the guise of continuing education. One would hope that psychiatrists, the guardians of our mental health, would refuse to participate in such chicanery. But I regret to report that the Northern California Psychiatric Society's Professional Education Committee is offering the following tax-deductible conference on July 10–12 in Santa Fe, New Mexico:

"The tentative program includes two operas, on Friday and Saturday nights (Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*), both superb, delightful, and psychologically sophisticated.

"On Saturday and Sunday morning, panel discussions of the two operas are planned. . . . In addition, some time shall be reserved for other topics of relevance to psychiatry, hopefully such as fit in well with the operatic themes which center on seduction, narcissism, and the dolce vita." . . .

Consider, also, the case of Dr. Dale Helman, a neurologist from Monterey, California. A reporter from the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* noticed him during the Super Bowl weekend because he was so hard not to notice. He was riding around Minneapolis in a blue-and-gold, chauffeur-driven Rolls.

Why was Dr. Helman in the Rolls? Because his accountant told him he needed a $10,000 tax deduction. So he rented the car at $1,200 a day and bought four Super Bowl tickets on the 50-yard line for $1,550 each. How would he justify the tax deduction? He was driven in his limo to visit one local neurologist. He took three others to the game. "Maybe at half-time we'll talk about the neurology of football injuries," he said. . . .

Warren Brookes died in December. Some of you may have seen our debates on C-Span and will not be surprised that, even though we disagreed on most issues, I felt great affection and respect for Warren. He was rare among conservatives in having a heart. Most people on the right are there because they are selfish, but Warren was generous, with a Dickensian sense of the fickleness of good and bad fortune.

He was rare among columnists because he believed in basing his opinions not on an arrogant regard for the magic of his own insight, but on his own hard work as a researcher and reporter, digging up the fresh facts that make opinions worth listening to. . . .

—*Charles Peters*

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Why We Need a New Marx

Because the market isn't moral

by Katherine Boo

Only 11 people came to his funeral: Karl Marx was used to being an unpopular guy. Still, 1991 might have thrown him. As the yoke of communism was lifted from a quarter billion people, apostasies abounded. Forget the erstwhile Soviet Union: Even China dismissed Marx's ideas as "not necessarily appropriate" to the times. And after 35 years of tilting at privately owned, socially irresponsible windmills, Britain's stalwart *Marxist Review* ceased the struggle.

In the epic contest between Marx and Adam Smith, Smith's market economy has won in a rout. As Maggie Thatcher recently remarked, "The whole world is now following the American lead." But don't imagine Marx recanting in his grave: There are still a few glitches in our system that would send that old schadenfreude down his spine. In the salad days of 19th-century capitalism, profit-motivated entrepreneurs left beetles in the bread; today they leave fecal matter in the whitefish. His capitalists poured gunk into the Thames; ours leak tritium into the Savannah. And more than a century after *Das Kapital*, those prospering capitalists still leave behind a politically marginal class of impoverished people.

Nine million of us are out of work; 35 million don't have health insurance; 13 percent live in poverty as the income "gap" between rich and poor stretches into a canyon. Even Marx, who had the soul of an accountant, would be sick of the figures. But he'd see that all this misery can't be blamed on business cycles alone. In the eighties, a decade that fuel-injected the incomes of the upper and upper-middle classes, the ranks of the poor and near-poor burgeoned.

"Buy something," begged a recent ad for Range Rover, neatly summarizing Bush's latest recession remedy. "Buy a microwave. A

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basset hound. Theater tickets. A Tootsie Roll. *Something*. Because if we all wait for the recession to be officially declared over to start spending again, the problem will simply keep feeding on itself." Yet as the president prescribes more capitalism, he seems to be unaware of a problem that capitalism, from Marx's day to ours, perpetually creates: If the workers are too poor, they can't buy what they, or anyone else, produce. To Marx, that fact presaged the revolution. To us, it suggests a way out. Maybe what America needs in its overexamined economic convalescence is not more market after all. Maybe what we need is more Marx.

Well, not more Marx, exactly, but a reconstructed one: a Marx convinced finally that capitalism is the best way to organize our economic lives, who grasps the importance of investment incentives and a vigorous GNP, yet who sees capitalism's fault lines, from the unemployed worker to the polluted river to the cancerous down-winder. So seeing, perhaps he'll arouse some popular passion for the third party the old Marx most despised: the state, whose role in crafting capitalism with a moral dimension has never been more needed.

Capitalist punishment

Ahmad Saloum has a life so simple it could be an elementary school diagram of market exchange. A Syrian immigrant in Brooklyn, he accepts no government assistance. Instead, six days a week, the 27-year-old sells his labor—12 hours of it a day—to a Queens shoestore. In return, he receives $360 a week, which he quickly sends back into the economy in exchange for food and shelter. But even a fourth-grader could figure out what's missing from this economic case study: opportunity—in Ahmad's case a very tangible thing. After a year in this country, he speaks virtually no English. He cannot read or write it. He doesn't enroll in classes because his work schedule doesn't permit it; his stomach doesn't permit cutting back his hours. He'll be stacking shoe boxes for a while.

JOB

We will soon have an opening for a reporter-editor. Desirable qualifications include practical experience working in or writing about politics and government. More important are intelligence, humor, and the willingness to work long hours for low pay. Applications should be accompanied by a list of three references and by writing samples that demonstrate fact-gathering and analytical ability.

Ahmad's expansive working day is a classic capitalist tendency in action. With the machines bought and the rent fixed, labor—man—becomes the great economic variable. In order to maximize profits, the owner strives to get more work—surplus value—from labor. According to Harvard economist Juliet Schor, this phenomenon is no 19th-century quirk. The average employed American today is on the job 163 more hours a year than in 1970—that's 320 more hours a year than his German and French counterparts. Unfortunately, those extra hours aren't being exchanged for more cars, refrigerators, or even electric foot massagers. A recent study by the Joint Economic Committee found that middle-class and poor American families have been working harder for 20 years just to maintain the same level of real income. Yet the breadth of the committee's categories disguises the truly significant phenomenon: While wages for college-educated workers increased during the eighties, the earnings of the less educated plummeted. More than 8 million *working* adults now reside on the wrong side of the poverty line.

America's working class, with its secretaries and pipefitters and security guards, looks a lot more comfortable than Marx's starving baker's boys, but two things about the working class's predicament seem to transcend time: It's still our most screwed population, and it still can't look to the government for help. When Marx charged that power tends to ally with capital, he wasn't just talking about Republicans, either. More than half of American families earn less than $35,000 a year, but when campaigning Democrats invoke the hardships of "average families," they are often using a definition of the term that included all but the top 5 percent of American households—a generosity of vision reflected in their tax reform plans. Consider Bill Clinton's notion of tax relief. If you're an attorney making $100,000 a year, you'll get an $850 tax cut. If you're a nurse's aide bringing home $20,000, you'll get a break *one-eighth* that size.

Of course, even if Democrats' tax relief plans really did try to give the average worker a break, a few hundred dollars' worth of rebates in the pocket wouldn't do much to address the root cause of his misery: chronically low wages, which are brought to us by a simple fact of oversupply. There are millions of Americans out there who'd jump at the chance to have any job at all. But, as usual, the state is on the wrong end of the class struggle. During the past two decades, government's notion of the "natural rate" of unemployment has crept from 3 to 6 percent, while

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full employment stratagems have commanded about as much political currency as proposals for reviving the draft.

America's "reserve army of unemployed" makes capital feel secure, at least in the short run. High unemployment keeps wages low, restrains inflation, discourages turnover—in other words, it helps capital maximize profit. But in the long run, it yields too many poor and jobless people who buy no cars, houses, or VCRs.

Of course, talk of increasing the wages of the working class invariably evokes from capitalists bleats about global competitiveness—and it *is* hard to deny that high wages to autoworkers can have an effect on the price of Chevys. But American executive compensation is clearly not tethered to such rigorous standards of competitiveness, as evinced by the stat of the season: The ratio of an American CEO's income to that of an average worker is 116 to 1, compared to 19 to 1 for Japanese CEOs.

How to give would-be workers jobs, and thus needy workers all the leverage competitiveness will allow? One way would be get "competitive" with executive salaries—something layoff-leaders like GM have so far been loathe to do. While a million bucks lopped off the CEO's salary package wouldn't spread very deep across the company payroll—a fact executives are quick to point out—a few more millions withheld from the vice presidents, PR executives, and marketing mavens might.

Still, there might be other, more imaginative ways to give the working class a hand. In the eighties, for instance, the steel industry noted that if it abolished mandatory overtime, 30,000 new jobs would be created. The UAW estimated that, with similar changes in the auto industry, 80,000 more people would have work. (Hmmm, the new Marx would note: The number of unemployed autoworkers today is 80,000.) But we don't have to rely on speculation. When IG Metall, the German metalworkers' union, won a 37-and-a-half-hour work week, 300,000 new jobs were spawned. But imagine Ahmad asking his boss for shorter hours at the same pay for the good of the unemployed.

Here, a creative government might sweep into action, exploring ways to curb the tendency to tolerate low wages and high unemployment without unnecessarily burdening business. But instead of finding imaginative solutions, our government's quietly making things worse with a policy so familiar we can barely see it.

Retirement security and health care are two elemental human needs, yet the American system places the burden of paying for them squarely on the backs of the workers and the people who employ them. The social security tax isn't just regressive; it's confiscatory. The combined employer-employee social security tax rates rose from 4 percent in 1955 to 15.3 percent in 1990. In 1970, the average fringe benefit package (which includes that other big-ticket item, health insurance) comprised 17 percent of salary packages; today, it's twice that.

This burden is perhaps the most significant obstacle to job creation in America, and apparently one of the least recognized. No major candidate, Democrat or Republican, has even floated the idea of removing the responsibility for health insurance and retirement security from the workplace altogether. The result isn't just that many of us, employed and unemployed, lack health insurance. It's that the sensible capitalist will do anything he can *not* to hire more workers and pay more fringes. It's far more sensible to horsewhip the ones he's got.

That government should provide direct, means-tested pensions and nationalized health care is self-evident to most industrialized countries, for the usual sappy humanitarian reasons. The new Marx might explain the compelling economic side effect: Reducing the cost of hiring extra workers would give businesses an earthly reason for doing the Lord's work.

Fish story

Still, when Marx observed that "capital is reckless of the health or length of life of the laborer, unless under compulsion from society," long hours and low pay weren't the half of it. He was thinking of basic human safety—something some capitalists could still think a little harder about. Consider the steel manufacturer Nucor, which runs 22 steel mills and plants across the country. In profit-maximizing terms, it's doing swell: its plants are five times more labor-efficient than the typical Japanese mill, which, needless to say, is a heck of a lot more productive than the average Pennsylvania plant. Unfortunately, Nucor also has the highest accident-related death rate in the industry, more than double the industry average. It's not in Nucor's immediate self-interest to worry about those casualties. There are plenty of folks in the rural areas where Nucor operates who'd drink a cup of molten slag to earn ten bucks an hour.

If we can't expect capital to treat its own workers decently, we certainly can't expect it to worry about the effects of sulphur emissions on communities 300 miles away. That's another capitalist tendency a smart government could rein in. But does it?

This winter, *Consumer Reports* sleuths descended upon shops and supermarkets in New York City and Chicago to buy fish. Of 113 samples purchased, 29 percent were spoiled and 44 percent contaminated

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with fecal bacteria. That kind of supply-side venality makes perfect sense in profit-making terms. Why throw out fish you can sell, especially when lax government regulations virtually assure that you can get away with it? For years, the fish lobby has successfully wriggled out of the mandatory inspection laws required for poultry and beef.

The new Marx would see that the only way to ensure conscientious capitalists is to have good watchdogs nipping at their heels. And our gut reactions to leaky breast implants and fetid clams suggest that Americans believe that, too. But *government*? In Marx's day, government toadies helped cotton-processers eviscerate factory reforms; in ours, they help auto manufacturers stall the Clean Air Act.

The old Marx, incapable of envisioning a government committed or muscular enough to stand up to capital, gave up entirely on the democratic state. But if capitalism is indeed the way to go, the new Marx posits, perhaps its inherent injustices can be countervailed by an aggressive government. Perhaps the state can play as heroic a role in the new order as the proletariat was to have played in the last one.

Heaven from Penney's

Heroic government? The idea seems ludicrous today, after decades of leadership that has viewed the government and the market as antagonistic forces. But government can improve American capitalism; in fact, it already has. On the eve of Franklin Roosevelt's inauguration, with a quarter of the American population unemployed and factory production halved, Reinhold Niebuhr wrote his famous epitaph for American capitalism, expressing the fervent conviction that it *ought* to die. Yet an activist administration not only restored faith in both government and capitalism, but—thanks to massive spending on public works and defense—paved the way for an economic boom that lasted half a century. While the best that Bush can summon up as a cure for economic crisis is a plan to dole out our tax rebates early, FDR in one term abandoned the gold standard; created the FHA, FDIC, and TVA; and put securities cops on Wall Street—activism that had lasting repercussions. In fact, acceptance of government's role in tempering the excesses of capitalism became so well ingrained in the American psyche that, as late as the early seventies, a Republican president was coerced by public will to create OSHA and the EPA.

Can you imagine FDR shopping at Penney's to stop the Depression? He didn't have to. He had better ideas, primarily because his personal commitment drew a legion of talented men and (occasionally) women to Washington determined to defeat the Depression. Harry Hopkins came, along with Abe Fortas, Paul Porter, and Thurman Arnold, who forsook a professorship at Yale Law to work in Justice's antitrust division. At the famous "Little Red House" on R Street shared by brain-trusters Tommy Corcoran and Ben Cohen, the birthrate of ideas about government's possibilities soared.

While some of those people came to Washington because there weren't jobs elsewhere, others were compelled by the idea that, as one of FDR's advisers, Adolf Berle, put it, declining a role in government might be declining a place in the history of capitalism. And it might have been. Although the government these idealists concocted had more than a few Rube Goldberg gears, it nevertheless managed to achieve several missions impossible: restoring faith in the banks, restraining Wall Street's worst excesses, and even controlling prices during a major war. In 1936, when a Canadian journalist asked Roosevelt what all his policy pyrotechnics were meant to accomplish, the president shrugged. "To do what any honest government of any country would do—try to increase the security and happiness of a larger number of people."

How did our faith in the worth of that mission change so much that by 1980 Ronald Reagan could win a vast electoral majority with the assertion, "Government isn't the solution to our problem, it *is* our problem"? In part because Reagan was right. As early as the late thirties, the civil servants who had given Roosevelt's rhetoric credibility had begun to plant the seeds of the eighties' disenchantment.

For starters, folks like Corcoran, Arnold, and Fortas, who established a tradition by coming into government, fostered a second one by leaving via the revolving door. (In his first few months out of government, Corcoran reaped $100,000 peddling his influence to big business and foreign governments.) And the cost of the revolving door was greater than a simple loss of talent. When other bright young men entered government, some did so with an eye to cashing in later—which meant not offending corporations that might eventually hire them. That cynicism fed the natural tendency of the regulatory body to become waterboys for the regulated group. (America's cod-eaters don't have a bumptious lobby to keep the FDA in line; America's fish processers do.)

Still, it wasn't just that the brightest were coming in briefly only to walk out to become rich; it's that fewer bright ones were coming in, period—a phenomenon fostered by a succession of presidents from

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Eisenhower through Bush who were either indifferent or downright hostile to the civil service. While the appeal of activist government, and thus the quality of public servants, resurged briefly after Kennedy's election and again during Johnson's War on Poverty, America's expectations for government had been gradually lowered. Add to that Vietnam, Watergate, IRS screwups, and diabolic clerks at the DMV, and the stage was set for Ronald Reagan. In 1986, one of the president's personnel officials encapsulated the prevailing sentiment in *The Wall Street Journal*: "Government's goal should not be employee excellence but employee sufficiency." With that kind of clarion call to public service, it's no wonder the Volcker Commission found in the late eighties that 90 percent of college honor students had never seriously considered working in government. After decades of neglect and narrow thinking, antigovernment rhetoric had become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Today, our market needs help, but it's unlikely to get it from a federal bureaucracy run by the diffident and the mediocre: a government that requires carpentry trade schools to have libraries but not to prove that they've taught kids a skill; a government that mandates the number of inches between ladder rungs and the shape of stuffed teddy bears' ears but can't find answers to key questions about job shortages, the health-care crisis, and countless environmental hazards. Thus even in this recession, Americans have about as much faith in government's ability to rectify capitalism as the old Marx did. National health insurance? Who'd trust the government to oversee our chemotherapy when it can't even deliver our mail?

That's precisely why we need a *new* Marx now: someone who understands where the market fails and has the energy to rethink government's role in fixing it. The choice isn't, as conservatives and liberals tend to cast it, between government and no government, between furious regulation and indiscriminate "regulation freezes." The alternative is smart, imaginative, efficiency-oriented government action. And it simply won't materialize without leadership.

As the post-Marx era dawns, our president can do what he's been doing all along: advise us to take our tax rebates to the mall and buy socks—poverty and unemployment and other quirks of the market be damned. Or he can decide that this is a signal juncture in the history of capitalism—the moment when, with creative government intervention, Adam Smith's work-in-progress might be perfected. The cynical 19th-century Marx would immediately put his money on the shopping trip. The new Marx, and the rest of us, should be dead set on proving the old man wrong. □

A good many papers quoted **George Bush**'s "So don't feel sorry for—don't cry for me Argentina" line from the New Hampshire campaign trail. But his preceding paragraph, say those who heard it, offers even more persuasive evidence that his Halcion dosage should be reduced:

"Somebody said to me, 'You know, we prayed for you over there.' That was not because I threw up on the prime minister of Japan either. Where was he when I needed him? But—but I—I said, 'Let me tell you something.' And I say this—I don't know whether any ministers from the Episcopal church are here. I hope so. But I said to him this. 'You're on to something here. You cannot be president of the United States if you don't have faith. Remember Lincoln, going to his knees in times of trial in the Civil War and all that stuff? You can't be. And we are blessed.'" . . .

How do you cover yourself, or at least protect your family from retaliation, when you repeatedly criticize the president and leader of your party? **Ed Rollins** did by always concluding his remarks with "**Sherrie** is going to kill me," which, translated, meant, "Mr. President, you can get mad at me but don't take it out on my wife. She loves you." Last month, as a result, Sherrie Rollins was named assistant to the president for public liaison and intergovernmental affairs. . . .

Can **Patrick Buchanan**'s America First campaign survive the revelation that he drives a Mercedes? . . .

Few here think that **Robert Mosbacher** will survive as chairman of Bush's campaign. Administration insiders, who have never regarded him as a heavy hitter anyway, blame him for turning the thrust of Bush's trip to the Far East into a search for American jobs that was clearly not a success. Mosbacher's reputation was not enhanced by a story in the business section of *The New York Times* describing the Commerce department as having been "weakened" by his "management." . . .

Rep. **Phil Crane**'s three daughters recently appeared on "Studs," a late-night show on Fox Television. Among their statements about the young men they had dated:

"Ooh, baby, his pouty lip is just built for suckin'."

"I painted his flesh with the gloss from my lips."

"His probing lips left me gushing with desire." . . .

"Chaotic" was the word most often used by insiders to describe the White House during **Sam Skinner**'s early months as chief of staff. Skinner calls himself "a process person," and he is described by former associates at the Department of Transportation as a "facilitator." He sees improving "communication" as his main objective. His principal consultant in reorganizing the White House is **Eugene Croisant**, the vice president for human resources

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WHO'S WHO

of RJR Nabisco, who likes psychological profiles and "teamwork retreats."

All this has White House staffers muttering about rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. One told *The Washington Post*'s **Ann Devroy**: "We don't do touchy-feelie retreats and psychological profiles of each other. We do politics. And right now, we do panic." . . .

Skinner's first big mission as chief of staff was to replace **David Demarest**, the chief of communications, with **Jim Lake**, but Lake turned him down. Skinner did succeed in exiling **Sig Rogich**, an imagemaker who set the scenes for Bush's media events, to Iceland, where he will be our new ambassador. . . .

But Skinner does have a social skill that is treasured by politicians. "When he's talking to you," says one of his friends, "he's looking over your shoulder, he's looking to your left, he's looking to your right. And yet, at the end of the conversation, he can repeat almost verbatim what you've said." . . .

When **Dan Quayle**'s aides **William Kristol** and **Carnes Lord** recommended that the vice president oppose continued funding of the space station, arguing that the cost was too high and that it would produce no "concrete accomplishment in space," **Richard Darman**, who supported the station, desperately cast about for arguments that would keep Quayle on board. The two that worked were: 1) that it would be bad public relations to cancel the program; and 2) that if the money were not used for the space station, it would be used for social programs. . . .

Gerard F. Scannell did not, it is rumored, leave his job as head of OSHA voluntarily, but was given more than a nudge toward the door by **Lynn Martin**, the secretary of labor, who felt that Scannell's zeal for promoting worker health and safety was unseemly in a good Republican administration. . . .

W. Henson Moore is the new deputy chief of staff at the White House, replacing **Andrew Card**. Card, who is now secretary of transportation, earned a reputation for competence during his White House tenure. He was also considered to be gifted at protecting himself in difficult situations. As one colleague observed, "When it was his ass or yours, you could be sure it would be yours." . . .

If you wonder why **Richard J. Kerr** recently resigned as deputy director of the CIA, you only have to recall his testimony last fall on the nomination of **Robert Gates** to be the agency director. Kerr signed his own death warrant by telling Congress that in August 1986, when Gates claimed he was innocent of any knowledge of Iran-contra, Kerr had informed his boss that the White House might have used profits from arms sales to Iran to finance the rebels in Nicaragua. . . .

Ronald Roskens, the administrator of the Agency for International Development (AID), has displayed unusual skill at an old Washington game: getting the government to pay for a trip to visit the family. AID footed the bill for two first-class round trips to Roskens' home state of Nebraska, two others to one daughter's home town, Minneapolis, and still another to visit a second daughter in Topeka. An example of the government business transacted during these journeys is the address Roskens delivered to the Topeka Optimists Club. When the government wouldn't pay for other trips, Roskens still managed to avoid depleting his own bank account by getting $7,883 from different organizations, as an AID inspector general's report put it, "in compensation of his and his wife's travel expenses." He also accepted a $3,000 honorarium from a Nebraska college that he later returned after it was disclosed that the college was a subcontractor on a large AID contract. While Roskens has been traveling, CNN reports, his agency has been the scene of widespread corruption and incompetence. . . .

In December 1990 Who's Who told you that it was **Margaret Thatcher** who goaded **George Bush** into his warlike stance in Iraq even though, just before he departed for that early August meeting with her in Aspen, he told reporters, "We're not discussing intervention. I'm not contemplating such action." Our report is confirmed by a leading Canadian political scientist, **Jean Edward Smith**, in his new book, *George Bush's War*, which will be published this month. . . .

Veteran Washington observers are talking about the similarity between the comments by **Bill Clinton** on the **Gennifer Flowers** tapes and those made by **Richard Nixon** during Watergate, from jibes about political opponents **Bob Kerrey** and **Mario Cuomo** to such stonewalling advice as "I just think that if everybody's on record denying it you've got no problem," "but if everybody kind of hangs tough, there's just not going to be anything," and "if they ever ask if you talked to me about it, you can say no." . . .

Bob Squier, the Democratic campaign consultant, says: "If Bill Clinton has to answer the Gennifer question, then I think George Bush has to answer the **Jennifer** question." . . .

—*Susan Threadgill*

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The Spies Who Came in From the Cold War

The world changed. Can the CIA?

by Tom Braden

Nearing the end of his life, the founder of the Central Intelligence Agency lay in bed in his New York City apartment and looked out the window at the line of traffic entering Manhattan from the Queensborough Bridge.

General William J. Donovan's mind had been clouded by a series of strokes. "You see that, my boy," he said to his visitor as he waved his arm at the taxicabs, trucks, and passenger cars streaming over the bridge. "I warned them about this. You know I did. Those are Russian tanks."

For the last 19 years of his life, Bill Donovan was obsessed with the communist menace. He preached it, fought it, worried it. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that he, and the subalterns whom he trained in his wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and who inherited his CIA, lived it. As these men retired or died, their successors, a somewhat less dashing breed, have been also obsessed by the menace. By the thousands each weekday morning, they've passed the old man's statue in the entrance of the headquarters building in Langley, Virginia, and gone to work: analyzing the menace, tracking the agents of the menace, measuring the menace's assets, trying to ferret out the intentions of the menace—"confounding," as the British say in their national anthem, the menace's "knavish tricks."

For 45 years, nothing has mattered as much —an obsession with consequences great and small. Consider the CIA employee who has risen to the rank of station chief in Ecuador. Over time he has learned that CIA headquarters will file without comment his report on Ecuador's ancient territorial quarrel with Peru. But he'll get immediate attention when he reports what the menace is doing in Ecuador. So does he employ someone to count the visitors

Tom Braden, a former Los Angeles Times *columnist, was a division chief in the CIA from 1950 to 1954.*

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o the Soviet Embassy, noting the times of entry and the length of stay? Of course he does, knowing that headquarters is more interested in this subject than in any other.

I wish Donovan had been around to see the disappearance of the menace. Like his successors at Langley and in Angola, India, and France, he would have been gleeful, but he also would have been dumbfounded, for the disappearance of the menace leaves the CIA without a cause.

Bill Donovan and Harry Truman, who didn't much like each other, were in total agreement on the CIA's purpose. Truman defined it one morning in 1947 during an Oval Office chat with his aide, Clark Clifford. The president had been reading the cables of the last pre-war ambassador to Japan, Joseph Grew, and he recommended that Clifford read them too. "After that," said Harry Truman, "you come in here and tell me how anybody could have read those cables and not known there was an attack coming." The reason the U.S. was caught by surprise at Pearl Harbor, according to Truman, was that nobody had drawn President Franklin Roosevelt's attention to the cables or to the enormous quantities of scrap iron that the Japanese were buying. "If we had had some central repository for information," he concluded, "somebody to look at it, fit all the pieces together, and report it, there never would have been a Pearl Harbor."

So the purpose of a Central Intelligence Agency was clear. But a purpose flies no banners and inspires no slogans. The early history of the CIA makes it clear that without The Cause—fighting the communist menace—the formation of the CIA would never have been approved by Congress. The Army's G-2 was against it. The Office of Naval Intelligence was against it. Hoover's FBI was against it. The first secretary of defense, James Forrestal, was against it. But Joseph Stalin outweighed them all. By erecting the Iron Curtain, threatening Turkey and the Balkans, and fighting the Marshall Plan, Stalin in effect founded the CIA. He gave it a cause. And now that cause is gone. As Lt. General Samuel Wilson, retired chief of one of the CIA's partners, the Defense Intelligence Agency, put it recently, "All my pillars of intellectual support are pretty well gone, because the Soviet Union forces as I knew them have ceased to exist."

Then why not abolish the CIA? Without the cause, do we need an intelligence community that costs nearly $30 billion a year and a CIA that employs tens of thousands of people and risks us deep embarrassment every four or five years? Here I must confess to an old boy's sentimental attachment to the place where I once worked. If the CIA were abolished, I would feel as though the house into which I was born had been demolished—not sad, but wistful. Yet at times even I have considered parricide, especially on those occasions when the CIA has shamed its country, its allies, even its own employees. There were incidents like the Bay of Pigs—illogical in attempt, atrocious in execution, and tragic in result. There was the opening of letters addressed to American citizens—a violation of the CIA's charter and therefore illegal. Or Operation Chaos, an attempt to spy on and embarrass American citizens opposed to the war in Vietnam, again a violation of the CIA charter and the law. Or the CIA attempt to assist Gerald Ford, then a congressman, in his campaign to impeach Justice William O. Douglas—yet another violation of both charter and law.

And then there were the bungled attempts to assassinate foreign leaders, and the murder of Salvador Allende in Chile (the CIA didn't do it, but certainly prepared the way). There were the experiments with mind-altering drugs conducted on innocent and unwitting Americans—unlawful, of course, and also morally

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repugnant. There was Iran-contra, too, but why go on? Suffice it to say that every American old enough to feel responsible for his country has been embarrassed at some point by revelations concerning the CIA. Yet, as Truman understood, we still need an intelligence agency—a centralized, vigilant agency—as much as a house needs a roof. If the roof is leaky, it's wise to try to fix it before abandoning the neighborhood altogether.

So what should be done with the CIA? Or, rather, what should the CIA do? I asked some members of the club—men who, because they were involved in many of the agency's most crucial policy and operational decisions, have a strong feel for what the new CIA must become, and overcome.

➤Clark Clifford

Except for the eerie emptiness of the richly decorated suite of offices, a visitor would never know that Clark Clifford has been, since BCCI, a troubled man. But Clifford, who helped draft the legislation establishing the CIA in 1947, is perfectly willing to discuss the agency, and his message, like his diction, is clear: The CIA should go back to being what Harry Truman—and for that matter, Clifford himself—envisioned.

He recalls how the agency's mission, as it was being crafted under Truman, quietly drifted away from the original concept of an intelligence-coordinating agency. When the enabling legislation was being drafted, Donovan inserted a phrase giving the CIA power to "conduct subversive operations abroad." Clifford deleted it, substituting a phrase empowering the agency to perform "such other functions and duties as the National Security Council may from time to time direct."

Clifford now says he intended that phrase to be an innocuous catch-all, but with this empowerment the agency secretly hired the paratroopers, bridge-burners, assassination-planners, dynamiters, and second-story artists who brought it infamy. The worst of these operations, says Clifford, was Iran-contra, because it involved a director of central intelligence (William Casey) conducting an unconstitutional exercise without the advice and built-in safeguards of the agency under his command. This, to Clifford, has been the CIA's great failure. He recalls Truman's words on the subject: "We must never again conduct the business of this country without being informed."

But what, exactly, should we be informed about? Clifford thinks the CIA's new focus should be the fundamental shifts in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Commonwealth of Independent States, all currently in the throes of instability. Says Clifford of the Commonwealth, "Those governments possess thousands of nuclear weapons together with delivery systems. We must learn who controls them and under what conditions they are controlled. We must learn the names and the whereabouts of the Werner von Brauns who built them and who, even now, may be searching for employment by other nations or by terrorist organizations. [Now] is the time to insert agents who can follow all the agreements among the republics, all disputes among the republics, and keep us fully informed."

➤Richard Helms

The senior surviving CIA director is remembered at the agency as a spymaster who sought to remain aloof from "subversive operations abroad." He is also remembered as the man who said no to Richard Nixon when Nixon tried to involve the CIA in the coverup of the Watergate break-in. (Actually, Helms didn't exactly say no, but he stopped well short of doing what Nixon wanted done.)

Yet Helms is also known, to crib from Thomas Powers' book title, as "the man who kept the secrets." Caught between his responsibility to keep CIA secrets and his oath to tell the truth to a Senate committee, between his disdain for dirty tricks and the table-pounding demands of both Henry Kissinger and Nixon to oust Chilean president Allende, Helms fudged. As a result, he escaped indictment for perjury only by pleading *nolo contendre* to the charge of failing to answer the Church Committee's questions "fully, completely, and accurately as required by law."

Now 75, Helms is, as he always has been, erect and laconic. Asked about the future of CIA, Helms argues that the CIA's mission is actually expanding in the wake of the Cold War:

"With the fall of communism, the intelligence job of the CIA has increased about tenfold," he says. "You have all these countries in the Soviet Union's land space with no clear control over the Soviet Union's weapons. You have all these people with know-how trying to sell themselves to countries that want to beat up on their neighbors. You can't discover their abilities or their plans by technical means so you have to use spies, and with the morality of this country, you can't give the spies cover. And that's the way it will be until somebody blows up New York."

➤William Colby

Like Helms, who preceded him, Colby is a Donovan disciple who demonstrated an astonishing ability to triumph over adversity. He was a commander of an OSS sabotage team during World War II, a station chief in Vietnam, and, later, chief of the Phoenix program, which sought out, imprisoned, and occasional-

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ly executed alleged leaders of the Vietcong. Although that resumé does not suggest it, Colby is the only lifelong liberal to have served as director of the CIA, the only one who devoted himself to such causes as the environment and nuclear disarmament. And it was Colby, urged on by junior officers appointed to investigate the crimes and misdemeanors of the CIA in the seventies, who personally went to the Justice department and the acting attorney general with the allegation that his former boss and mentor, Richard Helms, had committed perjury. Today, not surprisingly, his ideas about the new CIA differ greatly from Helms's.

"There are obvious targets for intelligence: terrorists and drug lords who threaten our society as much as nuclear weapons do," Colby says. Yet he believes that both the size and budget of the agency should be reduced. "Even the Division of Science and Technology can be reduced. Those satellites are very expensive to launch and it takes a lot of people to process the information they send back. As for covert operations, they ate up about half of the agency's budget in the fifties; they were reduced to about 3 or 4 percent of the budget in the seventies; under Reagan and with Afghanistan, the contras, and Angola, they went up to about 20 percent of the budget. But they're down now and I hope they stay that way."

The key charge against Robert Gates at his confirmation hearings was that he ordered analysts under him to doctor their views for political reasons. Despite his confirmation, no senior analyst at the CIA seriously argues that that charge was wrong.

➤Ray Cline

If Colby is a favorite of liberals, Cline, deputy director for intelligence from 1962 to 1967, is the agency's own favorite son. A brilliant student at Harvard and Oxford, he joined the research and analysis branch of OSS in 1942, when Donovan and his R&A chief, Harvard historian William Langer, assembled a team of scholars who would have put the faculty of any one university to shame. No men or women of comparable achievement inhabit the intelligence and analysis communities of today's CIA, which is perhaps why, in the mind of the current generation, Cline's name has a star after it.

It certainly deserves an asterisk. Cline detected the beginnings of the Sino-Soviet split as early as 1957 and said so, despite the derision of many of his colleagues. It was he who analyzed and brought to President Kennedy photographs that proved the Soviets had installed missiles in Cuba. He resigned from the CIA when he determined correctly that Nixon and Kissinger were not using the CIA as a source of information but as a secret weapon to do whatever they wanted without having to take responsibility. Now bearded and cherubic, Cline teaches at Georgetown, where he argues that the agency's new mission is a high-tech one. "We have satellites," he says. "We can eavesdrop on communications and we have openings to societies which have been previously closed. We have computers. The result will be an explosion of data so large that 5,000 or 6,000 people will be hard pressed to keep up with it. But analyzing it and keeping up with it is where our principal effort ought to go."

These men who were either present at the creation of the CIA or directed its work agree, despite their political views and histories, on two things: The CIA should remain in business, and its chief business should be intelligence. Instead of concocting operations—the locus of the agency's great failures (and, yes, some remarkable successes)—the CIA should concentrate on giving the president and the government accurate and up-to-date analysis. That consensus raises an obvious question: How good is the CIA's intelligence?

Before answering that, it's worth briefly defining what "intelligence" means. It means information gathered from satellites. It means information gathered from worldwide communications in code, open text, and by word of mouth. It means information gathered from books, magazines, and newspapers. After that, it means analysis—which means somebody reading or listening to the mass of raw information and taking an educated guess as to what it implies. That requires analysts to know a fair amount about the habits and mores of those who inhabit the territory from which the information comes. How adept is the CIA at this sort of data collection and

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analysis? There are indications that we are not as capable as we should be.

The most critical miss of late came during the Gulf war. Although General Colin Powell praised the U.S. intelligence effort, Iraq's Republican Guard got away, primarily because our military wasn't accurately informed of its position. Saddam Hussein had stationed his troops so that his Shiite population would bear the brunt of the coalition attack, and we assumed he had placed the Guard behind them. Only after American forces literally buried the Shiites with artillery and air bombardment did we discover that the Republican Guard was not there.

Nor did we have adequate advance information on the Kremlin coup this past August—although some might argue that it's unfair to call that lapse a mistake. When I discussed this failure with William Webster, director of the CIA at the time, he had an immediate rejoinder. "Of course we didn't have advance information. Neither did Gorbachev." Yet even less sudden, more accessible changes in the Soviet Union went unrecognized. The CIA gave no hard advance warning of the breakup of the Soviet Union nor of the dire economic straits that preceded it—despite the fact that the Soviet Union was becoming a more and more open society.

Why didn't we know? Webster says we did: "I sent memorandum after memorandum over to the White House pointing to the deterioration of the Soviet economy." Analysts who were serving under Webster at the time say they'd like to see those memoranda. Either way, the information failed to trickle up to the White House—not an uncommon phenomenon in the intelligence community.

"It's often a matter of how you say it," one analyst says. Any CIA director can put his signature on foggy analyses with sentences that begin: "Another possibility that cannot be overlooked. . . ." It's more difficult for a director to sign an analysis that grabs the president by his coat lapels and says, "Look, this is serious. This probably will happen—and soon."

Selective intelligence

Those recent failings point up a few basic truths about intelligence that endure with or without the Cold War. First, no matter how good intelligence is, it is worthless if the person receiving it does not pay attention to it or understand its purpose. This happens. The president most frequently mentioned by CIA officials as being prone to this failing was Ronald Reagan.

Second, analysis is at best a reasoned guess. Consider the Cuban Missile Crisis, when CIA chief analyst Sherman Kent came to the firm conclusion that Khrushchev would not station missiles in Cuba. To do so, Kent argued, would be both irresponsible and too much of a risk. Fortunately, CIA director John McCone had a "sixth sense" that Kent was wrong. Photographs taken later from the U-2 proved that McCone's intuition, not Kent's cold logic, was right. But what neither guessed, and what reconnaissance photos had failed to reveal, was that the Soviets had not only smuggled strategic nuclear missiles into Cuba, but that Castro planned to use them in the event of an invasion by the United States—a fact that was revealed only last month by Castro himself.

Third, there is always the possibility that an intelligence analyst will tailor his information to fit the desires of the consumer—that is, the political party in power. Consider the actions of the CIA when the Reagan administration sought to gain the release of the hostages held in Lebanon under Iranian control. Brushing aside CIA intelligence reports, the administration attempted to create the impression that the Soviet Union was menacing Iran. If the United States didn't cozy up to the mullahs, the administration said, the Soviets might conceivably send their forces into Teheran. The CIA, instead of sticking by its original analysis—which estimated that there was no Soviet threat to Iran—altered its reports to fit the convictions of the policymakers.

This, of course, was the key charge against Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates at his confirmation hearings: that he ordered analysts to doctor their views. Despite his confirmation, no senior analyst at the CIA seriously argues that the charge against him was wrong.

And, finally, there is the basic problem of bureaucracy. Junior analysts at the CIA say there are too many in the chain of command intent on placing their imprint on reports; often the end product is mush. There are also too many station chiefs and staffs in unnecessary places. Right now, agents are diligently typing up memos in tiny countries where even an unprovoked assault upon a small neighbor would hardly be worth waking the president from a night's slumber. Why can't the State department with its embassy on the spot take care of such reporting?

Of course, Robert Gates has been asking himself the same sort of questions as I've been putting to company men past and present. Now that the enemy has disappeared from the field, what is the CIA's role? With Congress smacking its lips at the prospect of shrinking the CIA—and saving billions of dollars in the process—Gates (like officials at Defense, Energy, the National Security Agency [NSA], and elsewhere) is scrambling to tailor a new role for his agency. After months of retreats, conferences, and soul-searching, the director is now sending out sig-

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nals that he not only wants to emphasize spies, but satellites. He recently proposed setting up his own mini-CNN, a supersecret electronic information system that would flash intelligence briefings from agents around the world back to headquarters. Who's the audience for this multimillion-dollar project? A few dozen agents at Langley.

Spy vs. sky

In all the recent flailing about, a crucial point seems lost: It's not which toys the CIA uses that matters, it's what the agency uses them *for*. Perhaps more dramatic changes are in order—including a change of personality and structure at the top.

The CIA does best, both as an intelligence arm and as a responsible representative of American public interest, when its director is a distinguished figure of national stature: an Allen Dulles, say, or a McCone. Such a leader is more likely to have the private means or the guts to resign when he feels that a president doesn't want to hear what he has to say, instead of being trapped into tailoring analysis to fit presidential preferences. Of course, resignations don't always do any good—McCone's resignation didn't change Lyndon Johnson. But they can give a president pause, forcing him to ask the question: "Don't I want to hear the facts?"

Along the same lines, I think the CIA would do better if its director were also the undisputed chief of the intelligence community, not just a board chairman. Although the director of the CIA can say to the chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency or the head of the NSA, "I think we ought to put primary emphasis on this," his recommendation is not binding.

Of course, such power only benefits the nation if the director knows what to emphasize, which is why the most important change in the new CIA must be not structural, but psychological: a willingness among CIA officials to liberate their minds from traditional Cold War definitions of agency work. I think CIA employees would give a collective sigh of relief if "subversive operations abroad" were removed from the agency's charter and if the ambiguous phrase "such other functions and duties" were spelled out to exclude those subversive operations. Certainly, such operations may from time to time be crucial to the nation's security, but such cases are rare, and we have men in the Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps who are trained to do these types of jobs. In the meantime, having a civilian unit—a small secret unit ready at the command of a president to assassinate or to disrupt—affords that president a constant temptation.

As for the satellites in which Cline invested so much faith, how critical are they now? When you had only nine minutes between warning and strike, they were essential—but now it's less likely that missiles will be launched at a moment's notice. Without the minute-to-minute standard, having an agent's analysis of the situation is far more important than knowing precisely where the weapons are.

Still, the new change should go beyond simply decreasing emphasis on satellites, operations, and the like. The real possibilities of the post-Cold War CIA become clear when you think about what it could do. Why, for instance, must that vaunted satellite technology be used only to survey military compounds? The CIA already possesses the world's most comprehensive collection of information on the earth's oil supply, exploding population, ozone layer, and water supply. But it keeps all this a secret. Couldn't we also use CIA satellite technology to, say, help measure the earth's deterioration, its diminishing grasslands, forests, vegetable cover, and food supply? This kind of information, though the CIA considers it less important than reports on unrest in Haiti, would actually be much more useful in our struggle for global welfare.

Yet as the wise men and the rank and file demonstrate, there is a very strong institutional pride in the CIA. After nearly a half century of looking at the world in one particular way, can such a proud institution change?

In some ways, it already has. In my own day, men who had parachuted behind enemy lines were in vogue. They were the agency division chiefs and their assistants, and in the great expansion of the fifties they tended to hire their own kind. The macho mentality was so pervasive that to say of a fellow employee, "The man has never jumped," was a mildly disparaging remark. Today, substitute the words "He [or she] doesn't have a Ph.D." and you come close to the same disparagement.

"I'm choosing the CIA," a recent 22-year-old recruit told *The New York Times*, "because the benefits are good. The government takes care of you." If the new CIA wants to do better than that—if it wants to find a middle ground between machismo and mediocrity, if it wants to stave off total obsolescence—it will have to change again, training those Ph.Ds on problems more complex and variegated than anything the Cold War required.

At the end of World War II, Bill Donovan was very good at rapid change. From Hitler's Germany to Stalin's Russia took him about a minute and a half; it took the rest of the country six months. My hope is that Robert Gates, even without a cause, will be good at changing too. □

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To help reduce its $90 million budget deficit, the Vatican now offers a 1-900 number in the United States, where callers pay $1.95 a minute to hear a message from Pope John Paul II.

FREQUENT FLIES PROGRAM

Aeroflot, the state airline of the former Soviet Union, finished in last place in the 1990 Zagat Airline Survey. Among the reasons cited were complaints from travelers about flies buzzing through the passenger cabin and live chickens stored in the overhead luggage bins.

YEAH, BUT HE'S STILL IN THE TOP 200

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that investment adviser Steven D. Wymer made Nelson Publications' list of "the 100 best money managers" shortly before he was indicted on 30 counts of securities fraud.

AND OUR KIDS WOULD BE SPEAKING ARABIC

Campaigning in New Hampshire, President Bush said that if it weren't for his decision to go to war against Iraq, "Saddam Hussein would be in Saudi Arabia and you'd be paying 20 bucks for a gallon of gasoline."

WOULD YOU BELIEVE 999 POINTS OF LIGHT?

After *The New York Times* published a story about a 75-year-old woman who ran a radio show for the residents of the Daughters of Israel Geriatric Center in West Orange, New Jersey, the FCC threatened a six-figure fine and temporarily padlocked the station because its signal could be detected beyond the center's property.

"AND WHEN I SAID THAT CLINTON SLEEPS WITH THE FISHES," CUOMO EXPLAINED, "I MEANT SIMPLY TO IMPLY HE HAS A DEEPLY FELT ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY."

On one of the phone tapes released by Gennifer Flowers, Bill Clinton made remarks implying that Mario Cuomo acts like a mafioso. Clinton later apologized for the comments, saying, "I meant simply to imply that Governor Cuomo is a tough, worthy competitor."

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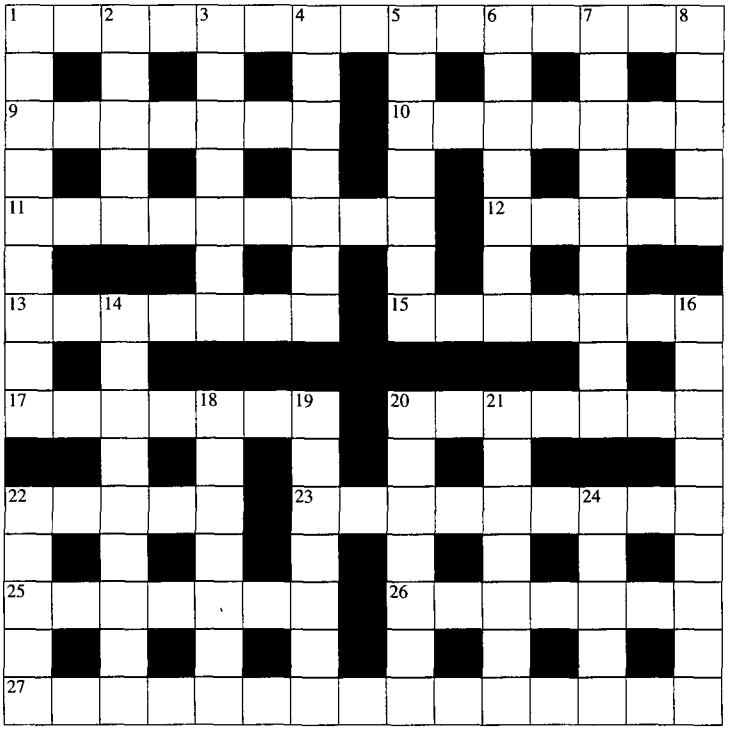
POLITICAL PUZZLE

by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g. (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g. USA, are treated as one word.



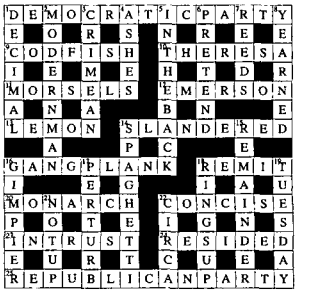
ACROSS

1. Clumsily replace minority in New Hampshire, for example. (7, 8)
9. Later came back around littlest state for second chance. (7)
10. Deer swallowing tar comes back to be tested again. (7)
11. Deserted, fell into neon swoon. (2, 4, 3)
12. Goes badly around beginning of replacing monsters. (5)
13. Perennially youthful sea legs developed. (7)
15. Came in to discover liens to be in superior position. (7)
17. Former, according to Eliot, skilled professionals. (7)
20. Both before and after man of the cloth . . . (7)
22. . . . gets rid of buildings? (5)
23. Chewed grit eaten to perform calculus function. (9)
25. Explosive timed to be missing. (7)
26. Dance, etc, in a new way for creep component. (7)
27. Mass pacing along awkwardly makes useful phrases in 1992. (8, 7)

DOWN

1. Distinguished individual in artificial range pose. (9)
2. Breezy start for tin or alloy. (5)
3. Be alien miserably in Kansas or Texas. (7)
4. Hues change slowly with last experience. (7)
5. He mixes ozone left and right. (7)
6. Company changed order to deteriorate. (7)
7. Tin aerial manufactured to show a selected example. (5, 4)
8. Models shaped from U.S. end. (5)
14. Indirect speech, i.e., hemp sum, translated. (9)
16. Dancing elves then minor fractions. (9)
18. Stone uncovered at store display. (7)
19. Leg bone to understand for lively party. (7)
20. Departs rarely for firecrackers. (7)
21. Painter fixed cog reel. (2, 5)
22. Tics about nothing disturbed impassive one. (5)
24. Show place turning an era around. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



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Dances with Sharks

Why the Indian gaming experiment's gone bust

by David Segal

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their checks cashed at the bank. The tribe retaliated by surrounding the bingo hall with pick-up trucks while Newton's security forces barricaded themselves inside. After a tense five-day standoff, a federal judge ruled that the hall was to be returned to the tribe. The question of who will pay the hall's debt is now headed for arbitration.

Although tribes have always kept criminal and financial data to themselves, and while the government seems equally disinclined to discuss the subject of troubles in Indian gaming, there's a growing body of evidence that what happened to the Senecas is not unusual. Since high-stakes, Indian-owned bingo parlors made their first appearance in the late seventies, tribes with gaming operations have been beset by difficulties ranging from graft to fratricide. What Congress envisioned as a fast track out of poverty and unemployment for American Indians has evolved into a billion-dollar-a-year industry that has added precious little to social services on reservations throughout the country.

"If we get the money from bingo, we're going to set up a vocational training program," says Kickapoo administrator Frausto. "Even if the kids don't go to college, they'll have a trade." Perhaps. But they may also get more than they bargained for. In one extreme instance, the Mohawks of upstate New York split into pro- and anti-gambling factions and commenced a brief civil war because profits from their seven on-reservation halls were going exclusively to hall owners and their non-Indian management team. Two tribe members were left dead.

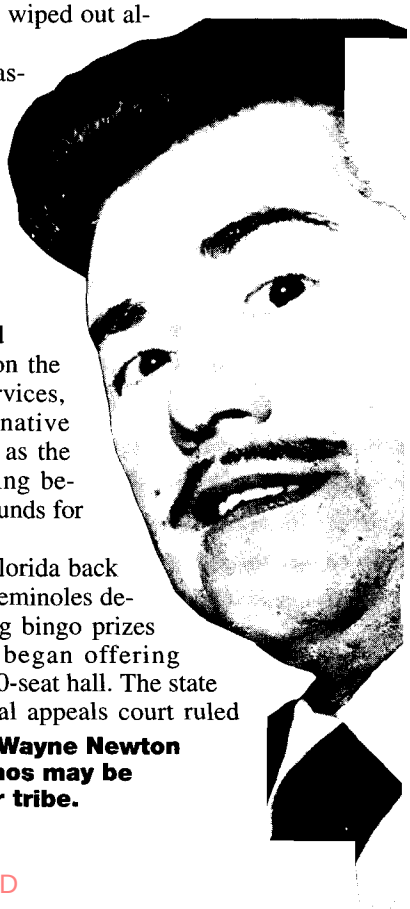
While it's easy—and partially correct—to blame American Indians for the unfolding gambling fiasco, the real culprit may be bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. After all, Indian gaming is an experiment that might convince even Milton Friedman that government regulation is in order: inexperienced, financially desperate Indians entering a slick and crime-infested business. But the Indians don't want help, and the commission the government created to regulate Indian gambling, the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC), is equally disinclined to provide it, preaching laissez-faire as tribe after tribe gets taken. The shame is that a few tribal success stories suggest that, if properly run and carefully regulated, Indian gambling can pay off as promised—in housing and modern plumbing, scholarships and jobs. Instead, as the Kickapoos break in the tables without expertise or government assistance, the deck has quietly been stacked against them.

To anyone familiar with the effects gambling has had on other communities that have legalized it, the Indians' venture into gaming may sound less like a shortcut to prosperity than a quick way to finish off tribal life once and for all. Wherever it's been tried, gambling has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in violent and property crimes, alcoholism, and drug abuse. Yet there is surprisingly little breast-beating on the reservations about how gambling could destroy what is left of Indian culture. (Could names like "Stands With 17" be far behind?) One reason is that Indians are a little more modern than we think. Another is that, after a decade of penetrating budget cuts, they have few other options.

Indian gaming took hold in the eighties, as most everything else on the reservation was withering away. While funds for education decreased only slightly in the Reagan-Bush era, other aid programs plunged. In 1980, the National Health Service Corps sent 155 physicians to reservations; a decade later it was sending seven. Housing and Urban Development, which had authorized 6,000 new units of Indian housing during Carter's last year as president, was building only 1,500 new units by 1988. The Economic Development Administration, which had funded bricks-and-mortar projects, was slashed to near extinction, while the Community Services Administration, which granted money for development projects, was wiped out altogether.

"The Reagan cuts devastated tribes," says Frank Ducheneaux, who served as counsel on Indian Affairs for the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs during this period. "Since most have high rates of unemployment and poverty and rely heavily on the government for social services, Indians had to find alternative sources of funding." And as the need for alternative funding became evident, the legal grounds for gaming were being won.

The first test came in Florida back in 1979, after the Miami Seminoles defied a state law prohibiting bingo prizes of more than $100 and began offering $10,000 jackpots in a 1,200-seat hall. The state sued, but in 1982 a federal appeals court ruled



Warning: Allowing Wayne Newton to run your casinos may be dangerous to your tribe.

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that since the Seminoles were a sovereign nation, state civil regulations did not apply to them. Tribes nationwide took note, and within five years, 113 bingo operations around the country were grossing $225 million annually. Legal challenges from states abounded, but in 1987 the Supreme Court decided that Indians could operate any form of gambling already permitted by the state—and could do so with their own regulations. In the 14 states that allowed groups to run highly restricted "Las Vegas nights" for charity, the door was opened for Indians to start up full-blown casinos.

A year later, Congress bestowed its approval with the Indian Gaming Act, which advocated gambling as "a means of promoting tribal economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong tribal governments." Yet Congress wasn't altogether sanguine about gaming—nor should it have been, considering the then-vivid example of Atlantic City, where the felony crime rate skyrocketed in the first few years of legalized gambling. (Las Vegas was steadier, ranking either first, second, third, or fourth in per capita felonies in the country's metropolitan areas between 1960 and 1984.) Nevertheless, Congress agreed that the Indians had both the legal right to establish gaming parlors and little prospect of raising badly needed money from other sources. So to shield Indians "from organized crime and other corrupting influences" and ensure that "the Indian tribe is the primary beneficiary of the gaming operation," it devised a complicated system of regulation. Yet to date, no government or private agency has examined the successes or failures of Indian gaming—Congress didn't apparently have much of a plan for overseeing how its well-intentioned rules would work. According to the FBI, troubles began almost as soon as the gaming did—and those troubles have included organized crime.

Grift horses

When Stewart Siegel, a dealer and manager at casinos from Las Vegas to the Caribbean, was hired to run the Barona reservation's bingo hall in San Diego, he brought a pro's touch to the reservation's games: Grand prizes like cars and $60,000 in cash were regularly won by planted shills, who then gave the money back to Siegel. After pleading guilty in 1986 to four counts of grand theft, including bilking the tribe of $600,000 a year, he joined the witness protection program and started talking. Testifying before the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs with a hood over his head, he claimed that he knew of at least 12 halls that were controlled by the Cosa Nostra but guessed that nearly half of all Indian casinos were tainted by it, either directly through management and investors or indirectly through suppliers.

The allegation is hardly far-fetched, given the economics of starting up a gaming hall. Indians are especially vulnerable to mafia infiltration because few banks make loans to tribes; their land, which is sovereign, cannot be foreclosed. So when tribes look elsewhere for start-up money, well- and not-so-well concealed mafiosi are often their most willing backers. According to the FBI, the trendsetting Seminoles unwittingly hired the mob when they opened their hall in 1979. (The FBI routed them out.) Two years later, the Cabazons, a tiny tribe in Riverside County, California, retained Rocco Zangari, a member of a Southern California organized crime family, to run their card room. When tribal vice-chairman Alvin Alvarez accused the management of skimming profits, he was forced out of office. Months later, he and two other critics were found shot to death. The case has yet to be solved.

Disorganized crime may be just as threatening. Under the most common contracts that tribes negotiate with management companies, the Indians are promised 60 percent of "profits after expenses," a clause that often means the tribe gets nothing. Examples of management companies cooking the books are legion. On the Mohawk reservation where the intratribal gambling war broke out, non-Indian investor Emmet Munley was found by his Indian business partner to have deducted $186,000 in traveling expenses and $120,000 in accounting fees. At the Seneca-Cayuga hall, Wayne Newton Enterprises was clearing $20,000 to $30,000 a month, according to Don Deal, who used to work for the company and saw the accounting sheets, while the tribe earned next to nothing. The Winnebagos of Wisconsin got a Halloween party and a back-taxes bill from the IRS for $800,000 but have yet to get any profits from their management company, the Genna Corporation.

Even worse, gambling has cut off the little federal support the Winnebagos had before gaming, says tribal chairwoman Jo Ann Jones. Allegations that the Genna Corporation has bought off half of the Winnebagos' tribal council in lieu of sharing the profits has so riven the tribe that members have been unable to meet and approve applications for government programs. Since June 1, 1990, all their federal grants for housing, education, and other social services have ceased.

So are the Genna Corporation and those other management companies corrupt? No one—neither the tribes nor the government—has taken the trouble to find out. While in Nevada and New Jersey the mere scent of ill repute will get one barred from even the lower echelons of casino management, aspiring

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Indian casino managers are currently disqualified only if the FBI—which runs fingerprint checks on request—discovers a felony conviction. The NIGC is supposed to be doing more sophisticated background checks, sniffing out the mafia and making sure tribes are getting a fair count from their management companies. But the commission is clearly not doing enough homework. Wayne Newton Enterprises' only other experience in Indian gaming, with the Santa Ynez of California, ended in bankruptcy. Emmet Munley was unable to get a gambling license through the Nevada Gaming Control Board on two occasions because he associated "with persons of questionable and unsavory character." (The NIGC's colleague, the Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA], which must approve any contract between a management company and a tribe, has also been less than vigilant in sifting out undesirables. Indeed, it was a BIA agent, Thomas Burden, who originally recommended Emmet Munley when the Mohawks were searching for investors.)

When a Cabazon leader accused the managers of his tribe's card room of skimming profits, he was forced out of office. He and two other critics were later found shot to death.

What has the NIGC been doing since it was written into existence in 1988? Mostly finding office space; it wasn't until February 1991 that it settled on permanent quarters, and even then it needed an additional eight months to publish its first set of regulations. It has yet to hire field operatives and has no legal apparatus to make and enforce its decisions. The man Bush appointed to run the commission, Tony Hope (adopted son of entertainer Bob Hope), plans to have the commission up and running by this spring. In the meantime, most Indian casinos proliferate and run in a regulatory vacuum. "When we started having problems with our management company," says the Winnebagos' Jo Ann Jones, "we didn't even think of calling [the NIGC]."

Slow motion is a standard feature of federal bureaucracies, but the commission has also been hindered by the combined resistance of Indian leaders—many of whom see the commission as patronizing and unnecessary—and the states, which have their own interest in making sure the halls are functioning responsibly. Adjudicating between two sovereign entities makes painstaking debate on the commission's every move inevitable. A set of revised regulations on what types of electronic machines will be allowed in bingo halls was heatedly debated for months in hearings in five cities across the country.

Even after it publishes all its regulations, the commission will probably remain ineffective. For one, it is woefully underfunded. Today the New Jersey Casino Control Commission employs 400 people and spends $23 million per year to keep an eye on Atlantic City's 12 casinos. The Indian Gaming Commission will hire 25 people and spend $3 million per year to oversee more than 150 halls. And what the NIGC lacks in financial way, it won't be making up with regulatory will. Hope intends to preside over a relatively hands-off commission. "There will be no micromanagement from D.C.," he insists.

The style is the legacy of a Republican policy, initiated by Nixon in 1970 and expanded upon by Reagan and Bush, to encourage Indian self-determination by allowing tribes to make their own decisions wherever possible. When James Watt headed the Department of the Interior, he instructed BIA to review contracts between Indians and bingo hall managers only when tribes requested it, even though long-standing law requires that all such contracts get BIA approval. The NIGC is headed for a similarly minimalist approach in its role as watchdog.

That the growth of Indian gaming coincides with this new governmental disinterest is a historical accident and not a very fortunate one. Washington's libertarian impulses may arguably be long overdue in other realms of Indian life, but they are misplaced in gambling, an industry that constantly tempts those involved with large sums of immediately available cash and easily fudged ledgers. What is true for the owners and managers of casinos in Atlantic City and Las Vegas is true for the Indians: Without strong, vigilant, and impartial oversight, they are easy marks for the mob and all types of hustlers.

Santee clause

The most recent opportunists have been Nevada entrepreneurs. The legitimate gambling industry, after years of casting an alarmed and disapproving eye on its down-market competitors and pressing Congress to legislate the Indians out of its domain, appears ready to adopt an if-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em strategy. The first proposal was perhaps the most audacious. It came from Harvey's Wagon Wheel Inc., a Lake Tahoe resort hotel and casino that caters to 2.5 million visitors annually.

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Harvey's and the Santee Sioux, a small and impoverished tribe in northeast Nebraska, hatched a plan to petition the federal government to take into trust three acres of land in Council Bluffs, Iowa, a small town just across the river from the 600,000 residents of Omaha. When the petition is approved by the BIA, the land will become sovereign territory, allowing the Indians to permit Harvey's to build a casino on it. Then Harvey's will buy 47 surrounding acres to build a $67 million hotel and convention center, cutting the Indians in on the action once the dollars roll in.

Sound dubious? Not to the tiny Kickapoo nation of Horton, Kansas, which is currently negotiating a similar deal with the massive Mirage Hotel and Casino. Since the Las Vegas-based company approached tribal leaders back in August 1991, the project has gotten a lot of popular support (the governor included) and made the tribe of barely 1,500 members some new friends. "We used to be 'those Indians,' " says Verna Finch, the tribal vice-chair. "People would not even use our name. Now we have a lot of folks acting like they've always been our buddies."

The Mirage deal is clearly good for the Kickapoo leaders' egos. Less clear is whether it is good for the Kickapoo rank and file, who suffer from a 60 percent unemployment rate. Although the nearby town of Hiawatha has offered to donate 70 acres of land within the tribe's ancestral boundaries to build the casino locally, the Mirage has made it clear that it's no dice unless the land is near Kansas City, an hour and a half away.

Because many Indians currently rely on far-flung, low-paying migrant work to survive, the promise of jobs is often a major incentive to tribes considering gaming. But these Vegas-scale operations will not ease unemployment. They need to be located near or within easy access of major population centers; most reservations, however, are in the hinterlands.

Regulation roulette

The jobs issue is even more important than it first appears because it is most often those halls and casinos employing and involving tribe members that succeed. While the Winnebagos went broke and the Mohawks turned to gunplay in squabbles over outside control, several tribes have been quietly fulfilling the gaming act's promise of more jobs and social services by operating their own shops.

Before the Mille Lacs Chippewas of Minnesota opened their Grand Casino in April 1990, 60 percent of their families lived below the poverty line; 45 percent were unemployed. By December, only a handful lived in poverty, virtually none were unemployed (most had gotten jobs in the casino), and the tribe had become the county's biggest employer. A modern sewer system, school improvements, and a health clinic are on the way.

The Oneidas, also from Minnesota, watched their unemployment rate fall from 40 percent in 1976 to 17 percent in 1991, thanks to their gaming facility—which is run with no outside management help. "I can't imagine why so many tribes are willing to give away 40 percent," says Bobby Webster, part of the tribal management team. With proceeds from their bingo hall, they have built a $10.5 million hotel and convention center and an environmental testing lab that has won state and federal contracts. They've subsidized their own Head Start program and built their own K-8 grade school. A high school is now in the works. While most reservations have been losing members, the Oneidas have seen their numbers swell by a third in the past 15 years.

Still, even when it works this well, gambling is no panacea for deep social ills that could be billions of dollars and decades away from a cure. Even among the Oneidas unemployment is still high, and drug and alcohol problems persist. But if a few tribes can make a little progress through gaming, perhaps more can. And in the absence of other sources of funding, it means a few more Indian kids educated and employed and fewer houses with trash-bag roofs.

Yet in their current hands-off mode, the NIGC and the legislators who created it are repeating the mistakes of previous would-be benefactors who threw plots of land, and then money, at tribes. By their passivity, they're effectively ensuring that good programs are flukes, not formulas—and that beggared but eager tribes like Eagle Bend's Kickapoos will be playing against the odds.

Keeping decent information about what works and what doesn't, and then providing technical assistance for start-ups, should be the minimal role of the slumbering NIGC. But it's not enough. While some Indians might paint any oversight effort as an infringement on their rights of sovereignty, this is the wrong moment for the government to be daunted by that charge. After a green light from the federal courts, program-slashing by successive administrations, and a reluctant thumbs-up from Congress, the government now has an obligation to tribes to make sure that gaming is run legally and in the interests of the people it was intended to help—in short, that gambling is the "means of promoting tribal economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong tribal governments" Congress declared it would be in the eighties. The last thing the Kickapoos need, after all, is another broken promise. □

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Swords into Bankshares

How the defense industry cleans up on the nuclear build-down

by Katie Hickox

It seemed like a government weapons contractor's worst nightmare: Energy Secretary James D. Watkins, the keeper of the nation's $12 billion nuclear weapons industry, announced this winter that he planned to permanently shut down at least four nuclear weapons factories, placing thousands of government and private weapons-contractor jobs at risk. The Department of Energy's (DOE) weapons production requirements had already been cut in half, and further reductions are expected. Gone is the Cold-War urgency that pushed leaky reactors and rickety bomb factories to pump out nuclear progeny under the veil of national security, and gone too are defense contractors' multibillion-dollar plutonium-processing contracts.

But as America's nuclear swords are beaten into plowshares, don't feel too sorry for Boeing and Westinghouse.

"Would you like to get a bigger share of the only growth industry in defense spending?" reads an ad for a new trade publication. The answer: "Defense waste cleanup! . . . Discover how to profit from $400 billion in federal spending."

Just as the government spent billions to make bombs during the Cold War, it's now laying out breathtaking sums to clean up the byproducts of the munitions splurge: radioactive and hazardous waste spread over 3,150 square miles of earth. The commitment to cleanup is the good news. The bad news is to whom we're handing the broom.

The contractor charged with undoing the environmental disaster at Fernald, Ohio's Feed Materials Production Plant has a hell of a job on its hands: More than three million pounds of uranium dust were exhaled by the nuclear rod production plant into the surrounding area for more than 35 years. The first step is a 25-

Katie Hickox is a reporter for States News Service.

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year scrubbing of the 1,050-acre site. But when the Department of Energy sought a contractor for this awesome billion-dollar project, it didn't look far. It selected a subsidiary of Westinghouse, the very firm that environmentalists blame for helping create the mess in the first place.

"At the time," says Ray Morrow, a Westinghouse spokesman, "we didn't have an environmental waste management firm, so we created one to clean up the plant." Playing corporate three-card monte, Westinghouse shuffled a few documents, offered a couple of management "retraining" courses, and voilà, a cleanup giant.

But it's not just Westinghouse. In fact, almost all of DOE's 52 major contractors are doing some level of cleanup work at sites where they now produce, or once produced, nuclear weapons components. The cleanup packages are strictly for the heavy hitters of the defense world: companies such as Westinghouse (which leads with six such contracts), EG&G (four), Rockwell International (three), General Electric (two), Boeing, Bechtel, AT&T, and so on.

To the bureaucrats and the contractors chosen to do the cleanup, the thinking is perfectly logical: Those who made the mess should know best how to unmake it. Moreover, the contractors argue, they have the resources and the technology to do the job right. "If our expertise is in cleanup, then I think there's not a problem. We do have the capability to take care of cleanup," explains Morrow.

But what Westinghouse and the government appear to ignore are the disincentives that such double-contracting implies—disincentives that promote precisely the kind of contract corruption that plagued the 40-year, spill-filled nuclear weapons buildup. To think that a contractor would deliberately dump toxins to bilk more millions in cleanup funds from Uncle Sam might be a little paranoid, but how much competitive interest is there in running the cleanest, most cost-effective production operation when you're also getting paid to manage the waste it churns out? It's like grading your own exam: Sure, you want to do the right thing, but there's plenty of temptation not to—especially when you know you won't get caught.

On that score Westinghouse and other contractors can rest easy, because DOE, plagued by a shortage of trained auditors for the burgeoning cleanup program, relies heavily on the contractors' own "performance self-assessments" of how well they're mopping up. The result, the General Accounting Office (GAO) warns, is that, just a few years into the cleanup program, taxpayers may already have been billed millions in "unreasonable and unallowable" costs. The system is so lax, and the stakes so high, it's even chafing at Secretary Watkins, who has uttered plans to eliminate such double-dipping. Yet an examination of the agency's recent actions suggests that cleaning up the program may be as difficult as cleaning up Fernald.

Double drippers

To DOE's cousins across town at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the scenario probably sounds familiar. In 1980, Congress anointed the EPA to direct the massive, nationwide scouring of thousands of acres contaminated from decades of indiscriminate toxic waste disposal under a program optimistically labeled "Superfund." Ten years and more than $10 billion later, it was revealed that nearly 50 percent of the chemical companies hired to determine the scope of the cleanups had been involved in creating the messes they were evaluating. Sure enough, an investigation of these firms' practices found that some were cutting corners—advocating remedies far less stringent than those proposed by the government and other observers.

The results at a number of these partially cleansed dumps were even more threatening to the public than if nothing had been done at all. During the mid-eighties, for example, the EPA permitted Monsanto, a chemical company, to design a cleanup strategy for a Houston site it had helped pollute several years earlier. Shortly after the cleansing had been completed, rows of new homes were built over the former dumping ground. But Monsanto's cleanup plan proved woefully inadequate: By 1989, according to a report last year in the *Los Angeles Times*, the cancer, birth-defect, and illness rates in the neighborhood were abnormally high. By the end of the decade, residents were abandoning the neighborhood in droves.

Even though DOE contractors may not be inclined to cut corners to save a buck—after all, they get paid regardless of the cost of the cleanup—the same fundamental conflict exists. And to its credit, the DOE has at least acknowledged that the double-jobbing is a bad thing. Last year it created a program that on the surface appeared to eliminate the problem—namely, separating contracts for the production and waste management ends of running a DOE facility. The only problem with the new agenda is that the DOE has barely bothered to carry it out.

Energy Department officials say they won't apply the new strategy at any of the facilities expected to produce weapons in the future—which include most of the cleanup sites. Instead, they'll wait until those sites are permanently closed down, which might take years for some, decades for others. In the meantime, the new edict is about to take effect at just one of the country's 14 nuclear weapons factories, Ohio's Fer-

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nald plant, the first to stop producing bombs. Yet that doesn't mean Westinghouse can't keep collecting on the cleanup. The new plan is fitted with a loophole wide enough to guide a Trident sub through—a clause that allows production firms to work as *subcontractors* for whomever is eventually selected as the primary cleanup contractor.

And sure enough, just as there is only one example of the new plan in action—Fernald—there is already one example of the contractor planning to take advantage of the loophole. While Westinghouse, which has held the Fernald cleaning contract for years, has agreed to give it up, Christopher Newton, a company spokesman, says, "We still expect to be a subcontractor there."

"We wanted to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest," he adds. As for an *actual* conflict of interest between producing and cleaning up? "We don't have the controls in place to know what's going on," says Vic Rezendes, director of energy issues at the GAO. Rezendes's mystification is not surprising. Most information about how well contractors are spending the government's money comes from the contractors themselves.

Greenhounds

Only about 19,000 of DOE's workers are civil servants; the rest—a whopping 141,000—are employees of private contractors. While there is a long and rational federal tradition of relying on contractors (the Pentagon's got 2 million of them), DOE's privatization might make even Ronald Reagan nervous. Major contractors routinely write budgets, inspect their own facilities, and even negotiate millions of dollars worth of agreements with subcontractors for DOE facilities work—tasks, in short, that should be the domain of the agency itself and not its hirees.

Perhaps the worst of this overreliance on contractors involves "performance self-assessments"—reports required by DOE twice a year. In these reports, which are DOE's primary source of information on individual sites, a contractor details its use of government money and its cleanup progress and lets the government know how well it's complying with the terms of the contract. The DOE then examines the written assessment—or at least it's supposed to. Unfortunately, DOE officials seldom go to the actual sites to determine if the self-assessments bear any resemblance to the company's books or the community's plutonium level. And it gets worse. If the company looks deep into its soul and discovers, hey, we're doing a terrific job, it stands to win millions of dollars in bonuses from the DOE. Last year, for instance, Westinghouse earned an extra $2.5 million for its own glowing report on the management of New Mexico's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant—despite a DOE finding not long before that Westinghouse had billed the government for up to $400 million in questionable costs.

One reason in-house overseers aren't too adept at interpreting contractors' self-assessments is that they're still a little wet behind the ears. They, just like the contractors they're monitoring, were trained to *create* weapons, not clean up after them. DOE's solution has been to rapidly retrain its personnel in waste management, a field—like weapons production—that takes years, not weeks, to master.

Almost all of DOE's 52 major contractors have snagged cleanup contracts for sites where they now produce, or once produced, nuclear weapons components.

Consider Ralph Lightner, a DOE headquarters employee best known for his work in the eighties on a bomb-making project involving isotope separation. The program was axed in 1990, but the DOE's Office of Environmental Restoration and Waste Management was hiring. With a wave of the personnel wand, weapons scientist Lightner now holds a high-ranking post overseeing the cleanup of uranium mill tailings. "What you've got is a lot of retreads," says Jim Werner, an environmental engineer with the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington. "What does Ralph Lightner know about environmental restoration and waste management?"

In the wake of the Soviet collapse, it's a common bureaucratic problem. The CIA, for instance, is now trying to turn its Sovietologists into specialists in the Middle East. And it does make sense to retrain smart, capable people instead of handing them the pink slip. But in the meantime, the inexperience is showing. According to the GAO, DOE officials admit they have no idea how many competitively awarded subcontracts they have—let alone how the private companies are spending taxpayer money. Nervous? Well, the DOE's inspector general noted in 1990 that the agency can't ensure that its major contractors are "operating in the federal government's best interest." It simply doesn't have enough skilled, in-house manpower to do it. Nevertheless, it's managed to catch enough bookcooking to know that "government's best interest" isn't always the top priority at cleanup and operations sites.

The corporations running the Savannah River tritium plant, Westinghouse and Bechtel, hid cost over-

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runs by illegally switching tens of millions of dollars in and out of a $400 million account for construction. In addition, last March, the agency's inspector general reported that in 1990 Savannah River workers lost more than $8 million in construction tools—about a quarter of the plant's tool budget. (After DOE reacted by removing Savannah River's site manager, Westinghouse promoted the executive to a vice presidency at its Pennsylvania headquarters.)

In another recent example, Martin Marietta Energy Systems, the DOE contractor for the Oak Ridge, Tennessee, weapons facility, received about $1.4 billion from the DOE in 1990 but neglected to audit itself that year, the GAO reported. That same year the inspector general's office reported $600,000 in "unallowable costs" on Marietta's contract, mainly on overbilling for hourly labor.

Indemnity crisis

Of course, Marietta probably isn't hurrying to pay that money back: Historically, Uncle Sam has been slow to demand apology checks from contractors on either end of the defense mess. As far back as the Korean War, nuclear contractors have enjoyed, for the sake of national interest, the luxury of being virtually unaccountable for environmental accidents, and even absconded funds. For instance, the government not long ago picked up the tab for a $78 million judgment entered against the Houston-based NL Industries Inc.—the contractor that abandoned the Fernald uranium processing plant in 1985. The plaintiffs had originally sued the Energy department, but the agency at the time couldn't foot the bill, resulting in a suit against the contractor.

Like contract double-dipping, liability is another murky area of the cleanup that Secretary Watkins has tromped right into, declaring in early 1991 that the private sector would be held accountable for questionable costs and environmental accidents. His approach had some carrot along with the stick: Companies would receive bonuses if they met their cleanup obligations in full and on time.

That declaration seemed to bring DOE up to par with the EPA, which was forced by Congress to revise its liability laws after disasters like Monsanto. Admittedly, the EPA's Superfund program is rife with mismanagement, but at least that agency's indemnification program levies strict limits on the government's liability. Yet, just six months after DOE's new policy went into effect, Watkins started flip-flopping on his own plan for contractor accountability.

Last August, the Energy secretary granted EG&G complete protection from any liability stemming from its work with hazardous wastes at the troubled Rocky Flats site, where EG&G handles both cleanup and operation. How did Watkins sidestep his new policy? He invoked a 1958 law that exempts contractors from government policy during periods of "national emergency" for the "prosecution of war" aimed at countering "the increasing menace of communist aggression." This, someone should inform Admiral Watkins, is 1992.

To Watkins, the Rocky Flats exemption was warranted by the bomb factory's unprecedented problems. The plant, run for years by Rockwell, is plagued with liabilities, including plutonium deposits in the air ducts. It would be unfair, DOE officials argue, to burden EG&G with legal responsibility for someone else's disaster. Nevertheless, cleanup contractors see Watkins' reversal not as a special case, but as a harbinger of future flips. The trade publication *Defense Cleanup*, which already advises contractors on "how to avoid personal and corporate liabilities stemming from hazardous and radioactive wastes," viewed the decision as an "open door" for other contractors with complaints. "It's the kind of thing that doesn't deviate from Admiral Watkins' philosophy," says Jeff Schwartz, a spokesman for EG&G in Colorado. "But what it wouldn't do is put a contractor in the position of putting its entire corporation at risk. It's a way a firm wouldn't have to bet the company to run one site."

Obviously, hazardous waste is a risky business; the possibility that employees or nearby citizens could sue for millions after a spill might keep firms out of the business of cleanup altogether (although with $5 billion contracts going around, it might not). Yet critics, who include members of Congress and EPA officials, say the EG&G indemnity clause sets an unnecessary precedent that could cost the country billions if adopted in future cleanup contracts. Lack of liability—like double-contracting—also means a total absence of incentive to do the best possible work, and, more than likely, a huge headache for the federal government.

Still, liability is what happens after the disaster. The government should make sure that disaster doesn't happen in the first place, that the controls are in place to ensure that our nuclear-production sites won't be quietly giving kids tumors or needlessly breaking the bank. But as DOE enters a new age of defense cleanup, it's woefully underequipped, both in manpower and attitude, to make sure that that epic task is done right. There's no excuse for that institutional failure these days, since the Cold War rationale for decades of contractor and government indifference to cleanup is emphatically obsolete. Perhaps it's time now for the DOE to transfer some of its vestigial paranoia to the cleanup conflicts at home. □

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MEMO OF THE MONTH

RECEIVED

DEC 10 1991

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMM.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
LANSING, MICHIGAN

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STATE CAPITOL
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48913
TELEPHONE AREA CODE (517) 373-1797

ASSISTANT MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER
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AGRICULTURE
CONSERVATION, RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT
FORESTRY AND MINERALS
HOUSE OVERSIGHT
LIQUOR CONTROL

December 9, 1991

Lewis N. Dodak
Speaker of the House
67 Capitol Building
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Lew:

On Thursday of this week a pistol fell from the pocket of a legislator in a caucus room behind the House Chambers. I am certain your realize the potential for a serious accident and I again call on you to take appropriate action.

Sincerely,

Rollie

Rollie

RGN/gt
cc: All members

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How the Stories Broke

STORY	Government Investigators	Print Media
BCCI/First American Bank	Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism and Drugs; British government; Justice department	Advances by *Regardie's*, *The Washington Post*, others
Salomon Brothers' attempt to corner treasuries market	SEC and Treasury department after rumors circulated on Wall Street	
Universities' misuse of federal funds	House Commerce and Energy Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations	
Sununu travel		*The Washington Post*'s Charles Babcock and Ann Devroy
Ivy League financial aid fixing	Justice department	
Congressional finance abuse/Jim Wright/Tony Coelho		*Wall Street Journal*'s Brooks Jackson; *Post*'s Babcock; Warren Brookes; others
HUD	HUD inspector general; GAO	
Felix Bloch spy scandal	U.S. intelligence agencies	
Generic drug companies' improper safety tests	FDA; Commerce and Energy Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations	
Corruption at Chicago commodities exchange	FBI investigation	
S&Ls/Keating Five		*National Thrift News*
Wall Street insider trading/Drexel	SEC; Manhattan U.S. attorney	*Wall Street Journal*
Illegal waste dumping at Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant	FBI investigation	
Ed Meese ethics probe/Iraqi oil pipeline scandal	Manhattan U.S. attorney; federal special prosecutor	
"Ill Wind" defense contractor scandal	Naval Intelligence Service	
Wedtech	Manhattan U.S. attorney	
Iran-contra	Justice department admits Iran-contra link in November 1986	Contra network: AP's Brian Barger and Robert Parry; *Miami Herald*; Reuters. U.S-Iran link: Lebanese magazine *Al Shiraa*

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It's almost two years now since I could have broken the BCCI story. But, as you can tell from the chart to the left, I didn't. In fact, I didn't even come close.

A reporter for CNN's investigative unit, I had been dispatched to Tampa, Florida, in early 1990 to help unravel the riddle of Manuel Noriega's money laundering empire. Surrounded by the competition—in this case a courtroom of empty pews—I took frantic notes as five BCCI officials, one of whom had been Noriega's personal banker, stood trial for a ledger of bank-related crimes. Buried in the mound of documents we gathered, as it turned out, were the inklings of the scandal: Huge chunks of Noriega's laundered millions had been funneled through Washington-based First American Bank, cryptically labeled in files as "BCCI-Washington." As we worked on the story, the writing was literally on our walls: more than 40 feet of homemade flow charts mapping the wash-cycle of Noriega's millions. But focused as I was on Noriega —that is, the story that everyone from George Bush on down heralded as the story to get—I regarded BCCI as little more than a complex conduit to get me there. Too bad for me, not to mention Ted Turner, who no doubt would have relished picking up the Emmy.

I take some consolation in knowing I wasn't alone. After all, some of the nation's top investigative reporters, such as the *Los Angeles Times*'s Douglas Frantz and CNN's Brian Barger, also ran across bits and pieces of the BCCI puzzle while trailing Noriega but missed the banking scandal all the same. While others, such as Larry Gurwin of *Regardie's* and Jim McGee of *The Washington Post*, helped break parts of the story, the real sleuths were government investigators, who not only uncovered most of the story but plugged away

Christopher Georges is an editor of The Washington Monthly. *Research assistance was provided by Daniel Manatt.*

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for years until the media woke up. It was—as measured by the great yardstick of investigative reporting—Watergate in reverse, with the *government* hammering away until the media took notice.

A rare oversight by the dogged investigators of the Fourth Estate? Hardly. While there is much worthy of praise in the national media's investigative reporting, in one area—perhaps the most important one—we (and I use "we" because, as a CNN investigative reporter until this year, I'm as guilty as the next guy) are woefully lacking. A close examination of major institutional scandals within government and business in recent years—HUD, the S&Ls, Wedtech, Salomon Brothers, BCCI, corruption at the Chicago commodities exchange, the Ill Wind defense contractor scandal, and so on—reveals that it wasn't the national press that exposed wrongdoing, but the government itself or, in a few cases, the regional or trade press.

"Most of what we call investigative journalism these days," says former *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* editor Bill Kovach, "is really reporting on investigations."

How could this be? After all, as NBC's award-winning investigator Brian Ross recently told *The New York Times*, we've finally entered the "golden age of investigative reporting." ABC News has not one, but four, investigative teams: one each at "World News Tonight," "PrimeTime," "Nightline," and "20/20." CNN made its debut two years ago with a high-profile team of 30 journalistic sleuths, and CBS's "60 Minutes," long king of TV's investigative hill, still draws tens of millions of viewers. It's the age of the pin-sized camera, the Freedom of Information Act, and unprecedented investment in investigative teams: The combined annual investigative budget for the three networks and CNN tops $150 million. *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Los Angeles Times* all have investigative reporters, as do nearly 98 percent of the nation's 500 largest newspapers.

The good news in all this is that investigative reporting in the regional and local press is truly in its heyday. And at the national level, investigators at papers like *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* have in recent years made an important commitment to explaining the news rather than breaking it. But while the national media advanced many of the major stories of recent years, in only the rarest of cases did they uncover the scandal. For example, while investigative reporters at *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* have filed approximately 800 stories since 1989, nearly 85 percent of them have been follow-ups or advances of leaked or published government reports. "Most of what we call investigative journalism these days," explains former *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* editor Bill Kovach, "is really reporting on investigations."

While the print press may not be breaking the big stories, they are at least turning over some of the mossy stones. The problems lie most glaringly with the source from which most Americans get their news—TV—whose standard method of investigative reporting is dressing up leaked government investigations and running them as their own. ABC's investigative unit, for example, has produced nearly 150 stories since 1988. While these included important efforts like a two-part series in 1989 explaining the international proliferation of biological weapons, more than 85 percent were follow-ups to government investigations. For example, the team produced 10 stories on S&Ls—a worthy topic—but six were simply reports on the latest government advance on the Neil Bush investigation; one was a follow-up to congressional hearings involving Charles Keatings's Lincoln Savings and Loan; one was a pickup from the trade publication *Thrift News* disclosing the Keating Five; one told of the federal government seizing property from Michael Milken's junk bond customers; and, in probably ABC's best effort on the subject, one disclosed financial connections between Keating and Senator Alan Cranston. Likewise, the unit produced eight pieces on BCCI, only one of which was based substantially on ABC's own digging.

Not only are the original stories few and far between, but when they do appear, they generally have an instinct toward the capillaries. We only rarely step back to examine the most significant problems of government, financial, or scientific institutions—why our schools don't educate; how our banking system has failed; where the space program has gone wrong—reports that not only uncover the dirt, but analyze why the system's not working, giving us insight into how to fix it. For more important than uncovering, say, that military employees were pilfering millions of dollars worth of government equipment—as was revealed in 1990—is explaining how the sys-

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tem allowed it to happen in the first place. To be sure, such investigations appear occasionally—remember the series of 1990 stories by *The Washington Post*'s Steve Coll and David Vise scrutinizing the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the 1986 series by Arthur Howe of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on massive internal deficiencies at the IRS? But these are the exceptions.

Yet worse than a lack of ambition and originality is what the networks' multimillion-dollar budgets do produce. Perhaps we can excuse the majority of the fare simply as audience-bait—stories such as a September 1991 "PrimeTime" segment, "Brian's Song" (promo blurb: "Beach Boy Brian Wilson is said by his family to be under the sway of a Svengali-like psychotherapist who is draining his finances"), or the fact that ABC's "20/20" did more in-depth segments in 1990 on domestic pets (four, including "Who Will Love My Pet: problems/solutions to pets surviving their owner's death or incapacity") than on any other topic. But even so, the few stories we are left with that are labeled serious investigations only fit that billing in the most superficial sense.

Consider—and only because it was hyped with an almost unprecedented double segment—the December 1990 piece by "60 Minutes" titled "Is There Poison in Your Mouth?" Conducting its own "investigation" of a story that had been percolating for years, the newsmagazine sought to show that ordinary mercury-based dental fillings are, and have been for decades, the cause of a wide range of debilitating illnesses from multiple sclerosis to kidney failure. Although no scientific study had ever linked the dental use of mercury to any illness, "60 Minutes" seized primarily on one 1990 study by a long-time anti-mercury crusader showing that six sheep fitted with mercury fillings had a drop in kidney function. The rest of the reporting was anecdotal. While science reporters at *Newsweek* and elsewhere had reported the story, stressing that the jury would remain out until the results of two comprehensive studies by the NIH and the FDA were reported, "60 Minutes" refused to wait. There will always remain some measure of doubt, but the studies, released a few months later, both concluded overwhelmingly that the use of mercury-based fillings is safe.

At least people closest to the TV news industry are honest with themselves. "It's a lot of PR," explains Av Westin, whose resume includes founding ABC's first investigative effort, "Close-Up," as well as stints as executive producer of "World News Tonight" and "20/20." "Everyone wants the cosmetic lure of having an I-team, but by and large what we do is amplify what's already been done elsewhere." Echoing Westin is the former executive producer of CBS's evening news and current CNN Special Assignment producer, Richard Cohen: "[Investigative reporting on TV] is a myth. In fact, the whole concept of reporting isn't held in very high value in television."

That should make us nervous. When we in the media rely on others to tell us where to probe, when to look, and even how to look, we entrust to the very people we should be scrutinizing the media's most precious heirloom: the right to set the investigative agenda. And at the same time, we create the mostly false impression that the press is probing our institutions and poking for malfeasance instead of selling commercial time to the highest bidder.

The easy excuse for all this is the high cost of doing business. Newspapers are facing cutbacks, and time-intensive investigative reports tend to be the first to go. In TV newsrooms, where network investigative pieces cost nearly $5,000 a minute, there appears to be little wiggle room for long-term investigations that can often turn up dry holes. But it didn't take $40,000 a story for a former reporter for a Washington, D.C., television station, Mark Feldstein, to advance—and at times lead—the investigation into Marion Barry. It tends not to be the team of high-priced technicians and video artists that gets the stories, but rather the lone reporter plugging away.

Pooped scoopers

Blasphemous as it may sound, we can, in part, blame Woodward and Bernstein for our troubles. The effects of Watergate, the Pentagon Papers, and the Vietnam war—the very forces that helped create the modern investigative frenzy in the first place—have conspired to change the climate of government. But in many ways, we have been slow to change with it.

"The results tonight of an ABC News investigation," said Peter Jennings, introducing a May 1991 spot on corruption in the U.S. Customs Service. But the allegations reported, made by Customs insiders two years earlier, had already been investigated by the FBI, DEA, and a U.S attorney, found to be valid, and been reported in the local print press. The story went on to disclose that the Customs agents who reported the corruption had been punished by their superiors for doing so. Interesting, but the retaliation had also been fully investigated—and verified—by both the Customs Service and the federal Merit Systems Protection Board. The published results of the board's public hearings, moreover, had long before been reported by the print press.

Part of Watergate's well-scrutinized legacy has been an increased ability by the government to monitor itself. Congressional staffs have tripled in size

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since the early seventies, and legislative initiatives and constituent mail can only occupy so many hands. As a result, more young, eager staffers, led by the much-improved cadre at the GAO, have the time and resources to hunt down fraud and mismanagement. Results of congressional investigations are too numerous to list, but some of the recent headline-grabbers have included universities' misuse of federal funds and a legion of problems with the Stealth bomber. Not to be out-investigated, the executive branch boasts inspectors general and other internal watchdogs who now police dozens of federal agencies from Defense to the Postal Service. Endowed with subpoena power and with the full weight of the federal government behind them, these federal and congressional investigators have a leg up on the press.

Beat the press

One result of all this self-policing is that internal investigators often beat the press to the story—and that's fine: It doesn't matter who blows the whistle on official corruption or wasted taxpayer dollars, as long as somebody does. But as thorough as government investigators might be, there are plenty of stories they miss—like Iran-contra. Investigative journalists might be going out in search of those elusive stories. Instead, most take the easier path—becoming increasingly dependent on the inmates' notion of what's wrong with the asylum.

An example from my own experience illustrates how it works. In the fall of 1990, while I was at CNN, I followed up a "tip" from a "friend" to a government "source," a Senate staffer who had spent well over a year gathering information showing that a new generation of radar jammers, at $3 million a piece, had repeatedly failed tests under combat situations. Yet the contractor was building the jammers anyway, with the Navy's blessing. Of course, said the Senate staffer, *The New York Times* was interested, but if CNN could get his boss on camera and get it done within a couple of weeks, the story was ours. I spent the next three weeks on the "scoop," shooting interviews and tracking down sources who had already been tracked down. Finally, dutifully, we shot a half-hour one-on-one with the senator. As it turned out, we never ran the story, but only because of logistical problems. No matter. It was done a few weeks later by the ABC News I-team, running on the evening broadcast under the heading "ABC News Investigation."

Should this story have made the national press? Of course, and so should most of the government investigations that uncover fraud, waste, and corruption. But is it the type of story investigative reporters should be doing? Hardly. Hitching ourselves to government investigators' bandwagons does more than make us lazy; it leaves us—and the rest of America—thinking falsely that we are looking where the government isn't.

And while we gladly carry the water for the federal investigators who have already chased down the story, how often does it work in reverse? "Almost never," says congressional investigator Peter Stockton. "In fact, I can't think of a lead I've gotten from the national press in recent years."

Of course, there's something lazier than tagging along on government investigations: our occasional failure to even go that far, as GAO and inspector general reports that might point reporters in the right direction pile up untouched in newsroom libraries. The massive proportion of the HUD scandal, for example, was laid out in IG reports years before the Bush administration turned it into an issue. Likewise, between the inception of the space shuttle program and the *Challenger* disaster, NASA's inspector general issued hundreds of audit reports concerning safety problems and defective materials, but the media never noticed. "One of our great failings," says CNN investigative reporter Brooks Jackson, "is that we don't read and synthesize the enormous amount of muckraking material these people put out."

The cost of laziness isn't just a few unrealized Pulitzers for reporters. By launching our own independent investigations of large institutions, we have the opportunity not just to reveal problems within the system, but to help *fix* them before the bailout bill reaches $500 billion or the *Challenger* explodes.

This proactiveness is all the more crucial today, since the legacy of the seventies has rendered the government and other institutions smarter in dealing with the press when they have something to hide. Damage control is now professionally swift and persuasive, as seen in the way the Reagan White House handled Iran-contra immediately after the scandal started to unravel.

An even craftier display of press management was the White House's reaction to a February 1989 investigation by *The New York Times*'s top sleuth, Jeff Gerth, into ethical and financial conflicts by Bush's ethics officer, C. Boyden Gray. Just days before Gerth's piece ran, with the administration aware of the imminent story, the White House leaked its version to *The Washington Post*. The *Post* hurried to get out the piece, which, couched in the administration's version of events, raised a much milder set of problems. As expected, the story that ran first received the lion's share of attention, effectively defusing Gerth's tougher analysis.

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Watergate also enforced the long-held notion that investigative reporting means the bigger the fish you catch the better the story you've got: From Spiro Agnew to Gary Hart, the stories that center around powerful people draw the biggest crowds. The savings and loans crisis, for example, didn't merit a minute on any investigative broadcast until the Keating Five and Neil Bush were unearthed.

The result: While reporters have dutifully "investigated" a slew of allegations of misconduct against people such as Newt Gingrich, Floyd Flake, Julian Dixon, Donald "Buz" Lukens, William Gray, Gus Savage, Barney Frank, and now Bill Clinton, we missed HUD, Iran-contra, and so on. By scurrying after the tip of the day, says *Los Angeles Times* investigator Frantz, "we give short shrift to the really enterprising stuff."

The irony is that it's this "enterprising stuff"—examinations of institutions and systems—that leads most often to catching the big fish. *Honest Graft*, a book by Brooks Jackson examining Congress's money culture, combined with *Washington Post* reporter Charles Babcock's long-term reporting on topics such as congressional honoraria, had more to do with the resignations of both Tony Coelho and Jim Wright than any story aimed directly at probing these officials' affairs.

Spun and games

Watergate may have made the job tougher, but so have obstacles of our own making, starting with the notion of the I-team itself. In theory, the idea's an ingenious one. Beat reporters and editors, in order to keep the tips coming their way, can easily become captives of the agencies they cover. Fearful of losing access, they hold back from revealing the grimy underside of their beats. To the rescue is the I-team, which, unwed to sources or agencies and unencumbered by daily deadlines, can scurry from hit to hit fearless of losing future access.

And, as planned, we are detached—so detached, in fact, that we often lack a true understanding of the areas we are expected to scrutinize. It takes months, sometimes years, to develop reliable, knowledgeable sources, not to mention a true feel for how, say, HUD or Wall Street works. My ineptitude in picking up BCCI when I practically tripped over it is but one minor illustration. "The problem with the unit idea," explains Steve Luxenberg, editor of *The Washington Post*'s investigative team, "is that your reporters don't have their ears to the ground."

It's little wonder then, that much of the S&L scandal was uncovered not by an I-team searching for a story but by reporters from *Thrift News* who had been poking around the industry for years. Or that some of the national media's most impressive investigative work has come from beat reporters like *Washington Post* Pentagon correspondent Barton Gellman, who exposed the U.S. military's coverup of friendly fire casualties in the Gulf war.

Yet the greatest consequence of the I-teams' lack of depth isn't simply that they miss a few stories. It's that they're particularly vulnerable to manipulation—to being "spun" to report whatever the aggressive insider itches to present. "60 Minutes," for example, ran a story in 1989 stating that the chemical Alar, sprayed on apples to regulate growth, was "the most potent cancer-causing agent in the food supply today." Despite clear pronouncements from the EPA to the contrary, "60 Minutes" instead seized upon a report by an environmental group, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which, although conducting no new or independent research, concluded that Alar could cause cancer in thousands of children. Turning to NRDC was far from crack reporting. The environmental group, in an attempt to get its story out, had hired a public relations firm that approached "60 Minutes" with the exclusive. "60 Minutes" took the bait and ran the hyped story. The day after the piece ran, the PR firm dispatched a cast of celebrities like Meryl Streep to hold press conferences and get the message out. It took several months to sort out the mess created by the televised report, but it eventually became clear that the risk reported was greatly overblown. In the meantime, the price of apples fell to its lowest in years and Washington state apple growers lost nearly $125 million.

Safety networks

Investigative reporters have, of course, come in with some groundbreaking, in-depth stories. At *The Washington Post* in 1989 Elsa Walsh and Benjamin Weiser uncovered how secret court settlements keep critical consumer-safety information under wraps. And in the same year, former *U.S. News and World Report* investigator Steven Emerson uncovered millions of dollars in waste and mismanagement at the supersecret Defense Mobilization Planning System Agency and presented a detailed explanation of why the agency didn't work. But occasionally reporters' best efforts never see the light of day, or if they do, they're buried deep in the paper. "There is an institutional reluctance to take on some of these stories," said an investigative reporter for a national newspaper who asked to remain unidentified. The editors "don't want to get too far ahead of the curve. It's the hardest battle I have."

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The national media nurtures its reputation for accuracy, preferring to kill or delay a story rather than risk getting it wrong. And that's good. But at the same time, important stories often sit on the shelf until the government blesses them with an official investigation. "As news organizations become bigger and bigger corporations," says Bill Kovach, who now heads Harvard's Nieman Foundation, "they behave more and more like the people they cover"—that is, less and less willing to take risks.

A close reading of *The New York Times* reveals a selection of what should have been front-page stories by Gerth that ran where only the most ardent of news junkies was sure to see them. In November 1987, his original reporting on a sweetheart deal between then-presidential candidate Bob Dole and a political contributor appeared 68 paragraphs into a 78-paragraph *New York Times Magazine* profile of the senator. And his August 1986 piece showing that Dan Rostenkowski, who at the time was a leading candidate to replace Tip O'Neill as House Speaker, had lied to the House ethics committee about a blind trust, was placed innocuously on page 30.

News takers

But as the truly great investigative reporting of recent years suggests, the big improvement we need involves not how we report our stories, but *what* we report on in the first place. The courts, the pension plans, the military, and other unsexy monoliths are far more crucial to the public interest than Chuck Robb's love life. And only by scrutinizing our institutions—by stepping back and reflecting upon the broader picture—can we live up to the moniker "investigative." But with each episode of "60 Minutes" and "20/20," it seems we are moving further and further from the ideal. That's unfortunate, since the stories that have the most lasting impact are long-term investigations like those by *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporters Donald Barlett and James Steele into America's tax inequities in the eighties—stories that played no small part in the tax reform act of 1986. *Wall Street Journal* reporter Walt Bogdanich's 1988 look at faulty testing in America's medical labs has spawned hundreds of investigations—and grim exposés—of local labs.

Yet equally important are those reports that pick apart our institutions, find that they *are* working—and tell us why. For instance, a 1991 *New York Times* feature by Susan Chira probed inner-city Catholic schools, analyzing why one such school in Detroit sends nearly 85 percent of its students on to post-secondary education, compared to a 55 percent *dropout* rate at a nearby public school.

Certainly, investigative reporters can't be expected to examine institutions all of the time—there are the Nielsens to think about—but we do have the resources to zero in on several each year. By the very nature of our "surprise audits," we might keep the people we cover on their toes, and even break a few big stories in the process. But even if we only get to a handful of such audits each year, we'll succeed in keeping the rest of America's powerful institutions warily glancing over their shoulders.

To cover institutions well, though, we're going to have to rethink how units are organized and reporters deployed. Each of the major dailies, wire services, and networks have at least one top-notch reporter covering the White House, the Defense department, and so on. Unfortunately they're all taking virtually the same notes on the same press conferences and then filing similar stories. More forward-thinking editors might consider relying on the wire services and CNN to handle the daily flow of briefings and photo-ops, freeing beat reporters to probe for institutional problems or systemic waste. This team of investigative beat reporters, moreover, would possess the wisdom of experience that prevents them from being spun.

But in the real world, the status NBC thinks it accrues by having a Fred Francis report live from the Defense department on the daily briefing somehow outweighs cutting him loose to dig out the bigger, better story. Given that, we can do the next best thing: Tap into the knowledge and accumulated wisdom of the beat reporters. It happens occasionally, and when it does, the results are impressive.

At *The Washington Post*, investigative reporter Charles Babcock recently broke the story of John Sununu's frequent-flying bonanza. But it was *Post* White House reporter Ann Devroy who, after learning that Sununu was having financial troubles, turned to Babcock to figure out how the chief of staff could afford to jet around the country. It took Babcock three months to locate and decipher Sununu's travel records, and when he did, the story was there. Unfortunately, as investigative reporters freely admit, they only rarely cross paths with beat reporters. "We've flirted with the idea" of matching beat reporters with investigative reporters, says the *Journal*'s Bogdanich, "but we've never really made it happen."

More than simply sharing tips and story ideas, beat reporters should be moved in and out of investigative teams, an approach that would benefit the beat walkers as well as the investigators. The beat reporters might better understand what the investigator looks for when tackling a story, and possibly even break one himself. At *The Philadelphia Inquirer*,

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which has collected an unparalleled nine Pulitzer prizes for investigative work since 1975, there is no investigative unit, explains reporter James Steele. "It's always been a very informal system with people coming and going."

In addition, we might reconsider *who* is doing the reporting. Journalism has become "the last refuge of the vaguely talented," explains *The Washington Post*'s ombudsman, Richard Harwood. "We rarely hire people like accountants and lawyers." Yet some of the most creative examples of in-depth reporting have come from people who don't just know the system, but who were part of the system. Consider, for example, former investment banker Michael Lewis, who left Wall Street to become a full-time journalist and relied on his inside view to write *Liar's Poker*, a rich exposé of the power of greed on Wall Street. The book of another banker-turned-journalist, S.C. Gwynne, *Selling Money*, took the reader on a tour of his working experiences at Chase Bank, revealing how the international debt crisis really developed. At the core, he explained, were 23-year-old international bankers like himself lending millions of dollars to dangerously overleveraged foreign nations and companies. (It was this insider's perspective that also allowed Gwynne, now with *Time*, to uncover parts of the BCCI scandal.)

And then there's John Dean and Taylor Branch's *Blind Ambition*, which combined the knowledge of an insider with the skills of journalist to reveal more about the culture of the Nixon White House than all of the other Watergate books combined. The vast pressure aides felt to expand their sphere of power combined with Nixon's control-freak nature to set the stage for Watergate. For example, Bob Haldeman's unrelenting internal check-up system, known as the "tickler list," kept the pressure on Jeb Stuart Magruder to carry out Haldeman's request to learn more about the Democrats' strategy. Desperate to keep the "tickler" off his back, Magruder turned to an ill-conceived plan to bug the DNC headquarters, and the rest is history.

The value of an insider's knowledge is illustrated by the success of football commentator John Madden. When CBS lured him into the booth, it brought in one of the best analysts in the business. (Of course, you don't want dumb jocks; you want the guys with enough smarts to put that valuable experience to work.) As the first step toward the Madden standard in media, news organizations could give preference to reporters with real-life experience in areas they are expected to cover. For those reporters without that experience, the next best training is academic; the best business reporters often have studied economics or business.

But with or without the background knowledge, reporters and their news organizations should be willing to take the time to fully understand a story—not unlike a trial lawyer who prepares for a malpractice case by attempting to become as much of an expert as possible in the area of medicine in question. It was this kind of commitment by Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong in *The Brethren* that allowed them to see that the justices' lowly sounding clerks are some of the most influential people in the nation's justice system, researching and even writing the court's opinions.

Finally, we should reconsider the tools we use in our reporting. The national media has long ignored the gold mine of computer-based data that most agencies are now required to make available. From the EPA to the IRS, nearly all government agencies have loaded warehouses of data onto publicly available computer disks. Alone among the nation's major news organizations, the *Los Angeles Times* has consistently put these large data bases to use, producing a string of standout stories in the last two years— pieces showing how big political donors violate campaign contribution limit laws and how the federal government lost 40 cents on every dollar in the sale of S&L properties. More than simply allowing reporters to poke into new areas, the use of these large data bases frees them from relying on government leakers to tell them what the numbers say. "The average government worker today has a computer on his desk with a lot of information in it," says the *Los Angeles Times*'s investigative editor, Dwight Morris. "If you want to get into the system, you have to think like the system."

Scud bluster

It was about three weeks after the end of the Gulf war—and about 18 months after I botched the BCCI story—that I won my first, and only, award as an investigative journalist for a segment I helped produce on Raytheon's Patriot missile. Unfortunately, the award came from Raytheon itself, *thanking* me for what was, kindly put, a first-rate piece of journalistic puffery. From the idea behind the assignment—a reaction to a fleeting development—to the way I reported it—by relying on congressional sources and a mix of Washington-based policy types—I came up with exactly what I should have expected: yet another piece marveling at the space-age technology. Predictably, it has since come to light that the Patriot is beset with a multitude of technical problems.

My reward, a bronze "Scudbuster" lapel pin and accompanying certificate, now hang above my desk, where they serve as a reminder of what we can accomplish when we really aren't trying. □

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Ward is Hell

Why even America's best hospitals can kill you

by John Crewdson

I am writing this in Los Angeles, where I arrived yesterday from New York. I am happy to be here, not only because the mid-January temperature is 40 degrees warmer, but (and this is the truth) because Los Angeles is a better place than New York to get sick.

Don't misunderstand. Not only am I not sick, but according to my doctor I am healthier than I deserve to be. Still, I am middle-aged and overweight and lately I have been wondering, as I travel here and there, about what to do if I get run over by a taxi or fall off a hotel balcony or choke on a chicken bone—or if, God forbid, the Big One hits. As I have suspected, and as Walt Bogdanich* now confirms, there are some really bad places in America to get sick. New York is probably the worst. A couple of years ago, as I began to get in touch with my mortality, I asked my friend, a New York doctor, which of that city's many distinguished hospitals I should choose in the event of cardiac arrest. "None of them," she said. "Don't get sick in New York."

She wasn't kidding. Since then, while reporting on AIDS, I have visited a number of New York hospitals in which I would never, under any circumstances, want to be a patient. High on the list is Bellevue, where you'll probably end up if you become cyanotic while choking on a chicken bone, and where you'll discover that the chicken-bone chokers have to get in line behind the hit-and-runs and the heart attacks and the gunshot wounds. There are plenty of New York City hospitals worse than Bellevue, but not many that are better. People who have enough money to buy their own hospitals (the late Shah of Iran comes to mind) seem to like New York Hospital, the teaching adjunct of Cornell Medical School. But as Bogdanich points out, New York Hos-

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**The Great White Lie.* Walt Bogdanich. *Simon and Schuster, $22.50.*

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pital is also where Andy Warhol died, not because of some rare affliction or inoperable complication, but because he was left unattended following a routine operation on his gallbladder (and he had a private nurse).

Here in Los Angeles my chances are better. In Beverly Hills there's the redoubtable Cedars Sinai ("We have plenty of room. Just come on over," said the calm, cheerful emergency-room nursing supervisor when I telephoned the other night to ask how things were going), with the UCLA Med Center a close second. The Los Angeles suburbs also have some first-class hospitals: St. John's in Santa Monica, Pasadena's Huntington, and Valley Presbyterian in the San Fernando Valley. After that the list gets short, and it's even shorter in San Francisco, which hasn't had a truly great hospital since French Hospital closed down. In fact, I'd try to make it to Stanford before I'd check into S.F. General, where employees frequently don't answer the telephone and often seem confused about whether a particular doctor is on the staff. Washington, D.C., where I live, has a couple of well-known hospitals that are OK (and a couple of well-known ones that are less OK), but unless I was bleeding to death I'd head for Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, consistently rated as top in the nation. Anyone wishing to know where *not* to go may drop me a stamped, self-addressed envelope in care of this magazine. Or buy Bogdanich's book.

The good hospital-bad hospital game can be lots of fun—doctors play it all the time—but as the doctors themselves are the first to admit, it's ultimately misleading. The truth is, even at the newest and best-equipped hospitals staffed by the best-trained and most conscientious staff, fatal mistakes are made with some regularity. The best hospital in the world is probably the Cambridge University Hospital in England, where patients are frequently transported from London, 60 miles away. (Tell the ambulance driver you want the "new hospital" or you'll end up at the wrong place; there is more than one hospital in Cambridge.) Even so, I remember having dinner with a group of doctors and nurses there and listening to Dr. X, a truly brilliant young physician in whose hands I would unhesitatingly place myself tomorrow, calmly describe over coffee how he had killed a patient the week before by overprescribing TPA, the anti-coagulant that stops heart attacks in progress (unless you overdo it).

No one wants to end up pushing daisies because somebody like Andy Warhol's nurse wasn't paying attention. On the other hand, doctors are human and it's hard to find one who won't admit, if he knows you well enough, to having killed the odd patient at some point in his career. But Bogdanich, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter who won a Pulitzer for exposing the sorry state of the medical laboratory business, is trying to tell us about something more important than the inevitability of human error in the practice of medicine. He's saying that no matter what the American Hospital Association and the American Medical Association and all those other associations maintain, the notion that hospitals and doctors are somehow deserving of our complete and unquestioning trust is medicine's great white lie.

Test tube maybes

A tour of Bogdanich's hospital begins at the nurses' station, where perhaps you're expecting to find your fantasy nurse: smart, tireless, dedicated, compassionate, equal parts Albert Schweitzer and Mary Poppins. You might actually find her, since such nurses still exist, although in ever-diminishing numbers and against all reason (considering what nurses get paid for what they have to do). As Bogdanich notes, however, more than half the big-city hospitals in this country employ, or have employed, temporary rent-a-nurses who may 1) have spent less time in that particular hospital than you, the patient; 2) never have been trained in the hospital's fundamental practices and procedures; 3) be on the short end of a 24-hour shift that started in another hospital; or 4) not be a registered nurse at all, but a vocational or practical nurse foisted on the unsuspecting hospital as a certified RN by an unscrupulous nursing agency like the one Bogdanich discovered in Florida. Or maybe Nurse Nancy happens to be a psychopathic killer; after all, a Washington-area RN was recently charged with, although never convicted of, murdering her most bothersome patients by injecting them with potassium chloride.

Not feeling quite so sanguine about that vision in white who's materialized by your bedside with a hypodermic in hand? Then climb out of bed and come visit the pharmacy, where life-and-death decisions are made every hour by employees who may be the most poorly trained and overworked in the hospital. Upstairs in the operating theater is the surgeon Bogdanich describes who is preparing to perform coronary bypass surgery on a 33-year-old father of three. During the operation the patient will be kept alive by a heart-and-lung machine while his own heart, temporarily out of action, is bathed in cardioplegic fluid, which the surgeon has asked the pharmacy to send up to the operating room. The operation goes well, but at the last moment the surgeon discovers that the patient's heart can't be restarted. The man is still alive because of the machine, but not for long. When no transplant can be found, he dies. Instead of cardio-

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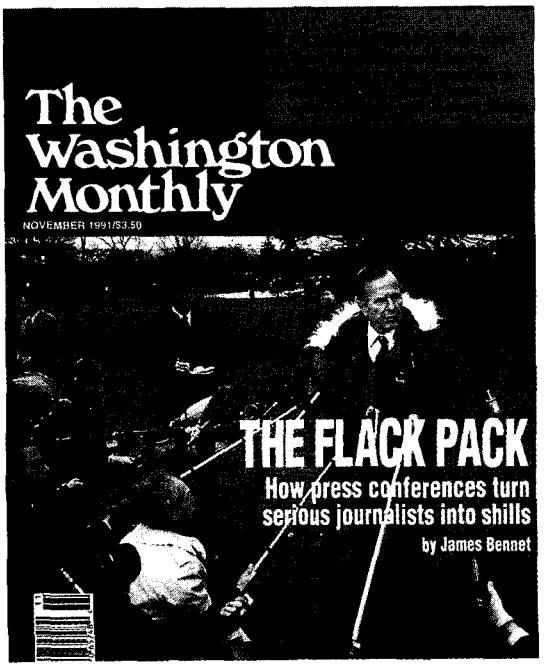
Common Sense



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plegic solution, which sustains the heart tissue by temporary paralysis, an untrained clerk in the hospital pharmacy—a 19-year-old previously employed as a dry cleaner and an ice-cream store clerk—sent the surgeon plastic bags filled with glucose and water. Her fatal error is mitigated only slightly by the fact that some idiot decided to store the two solutions in the same kind of bag.

Down the corridor from the pharmacy is the hospital's laboratory, where workers just as ill-trained and underpaid as the pharmacy clerk are matching (or mismatching) blood for transfusions, testing (or mixing up) patient samples, and performing (or misreading) complicated diagnostic assays under conditions that may be at best unhygienic and at worst appallingly disorganized and dirty. Only yesterday I visited a well-regarded Southern California medical center to observe a demonstration of a new piece of equipment. On the floor next to my feet was an open container filled to the brim with bloody test tubes, swabs, and latex gloves. "Don't put your hand in there," the lab chief warned me, not that I was about to. "That's stuff from the AIDS tests we did this morning." During the demonstration the lab chief, who claimed to have a master's degree in biochemistry, couldn't seem to remember the difference between "antigen" and "antibody" (there's a big difference). Midway through, he was interrupted by one of his technicians, an unkempt fellow with two days of grey stubble on his beet-red face who might have passed for a homeless person on the street outside the hospital. The reason for the interruption appeared to be some sort of mistake that had taken place earlier that day. "No problem," the lab chief assured the tech. "The doctor gave the injection anyway, so everything's OK." What might have happened had the injection not been given, the lab chief did not say, but he clearly seemed relieved. "Would I ever get on the witness stand and testify that we don't make mistakes?" he said to me after the technician had gone back to work. "No way. But so far we've never been sued."

The nursing stations, operating rooms, pharmacies, and labs at the Bogdanich Medical Center are not the only places where problems are waiting to happen. Here in the hospital's billing department, clerks spend their time searching for the precise combination of diagnostic codes for each patient that will bring the hospital the greatest possible reimbursement from Medicare, whether or not those diagnoses accurately reflect the patient's condition. And here is the hospital's discharging office, whose job is to push patients out the door the very moment those reimbursements are cut off by federal cost-containment guidelines, regardless of whether the patients have recovered. (This particular discharge office has a special section that steers such patients to local nursing homes in return for sizable kickbacks.) And here, finally, is the office of the hospital's chief administrator, who, rather than waste time searching for ways to improve patient care in the face of static or shrinking revenues, is putting the finishing touches on his latest scheme for "incentive payments" to doctors who send their patients to him rather than to the competing hospital across town.

Dr. X, a truly brilliant young physician in whose hands I would unhesitatingly place myself tomorrow, calmly described over coffee how he had killed a patient the week before by overprescribing TPA, the anti-coagulant that stops heart attacks in progress —unless you overdo it.

A nightmare vision to be sure. But isn't the "hospital from hell" exactly what all those state and federal boards and agencies that oversee the health-care system are supposed to prevent? Bogdanich's answer is that while the regulators certainly exist, they often don't do their job. How else can one explain the New London Hospital of Elyria, Ohio, where the chief of surgery had previously lost his medical license for dispensing illegal drugs? Where the chief of staff had been charged with putting out a contract on his former boss? Where the chief administrator was a local real-estate salesman and convicted felon, and his assistant a lapsed Catholic priest who had married a divorced belly dancer named Saudi Arabia on a Mississippi riverboat? Where the resident psychologist had done hard time for Medicaid fraud? Where the surgeon who headed the hospital's review committee had failed a national licensing exam? Where a staff physician had been charged in another state with having billed a single patient for 288 unnecessary office visits, 285 unnecessary lab procedures, and 597 unnecessary injections? Where unsuspecting patients were often brought by ambulance from hundreds of miles away? Or where, at the time he assumed office, the chairman of the hospital's board was under indictment for grand theft? The good news is that New

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London was discovered, eventually, for the deadly patient-packing scam it was. The bad news is that the discovery was made not by Ohio's hospital regulators but via a newspaper exposé.

From the first horror story to the last, *The Great White Lie* is a truly terrifying book, a portrait of a health-care delivery system where the patients check in but don't check out. The question it inevitably raises is not whether the stories are true (Bogdanich's facts are documented and he is a careful reporter) but whether they paint a representative picture. Every day, after all, thousands of Americans are discharged from hospitals cured of whatever ailed them (I myself have been hospitalized for surgery three times and have survived to write this review). So it's possible that this is less a systemic indictment than simply a shocking collection of worst possible cases, tales from the crypt. In attempting to give the reader perspective, Bogdanich offers a few statistical extrapolations: In New York state in a single year, he writes, poor medical care "figured in the deaths of nearly 7,000 patients," from which he deduces that "poor medical care may be linked to 80,000 deaths a year" nationwide. Such assessments, of course, are so imprecise they are meaningless. (What constitutes "poor medical care"? What exactly does "linked to" mean, or "figured in"?) On the other hand, such factors may be impossible to measure in the aggregate, and Bogdanich points out that numbers define only one dimension of the problem.

Also in his favor is the fact that he is hardly the first to have sounded an alarm about the quality, availability, and affordability of health care. Sidney Wolfe, head of the Public Citizen Health Research Group, has been doing so for years, and so have successive squadrons of congressional investigators. Anyone who spends much time around doctors and hospitals, as I do, can't have any doubt that the health-care industry is in some kind of trouble. Finally, and perhaps most convincingly, it is harder now than ever to find someone who's recently been hospitalized, or even someone whose friend or relative has been in the hospital, who doesn't have a scary story about unattended nursing stations or understaffed emergency rooms or unwatched monitors or misprescribed medications.

While the precise extent of such failings remains unknown, one of the most disturbing aspects of Bogdanich's book is the lengths to which the health-care providers and regulators, and, of course, those who represent them, will go to keep the rest of us from becoming informed consumers of the services they provide—not just by covering up suspicious deaths and protecting incompetent practitioners, but by making it nearly impossible for a prospective patient to play the odds based on hospitals' track records. The essence of the "great white lie," after all, is the industry's denial that the odds even exist. Bogdanich writes:

> Overall, hospital care remains a crapshoot for most American families. Most patients lack the research tools, for example, to learn that three open-heart units in northwest Indiana had mortality rates in the late eighties two to three times greater than some hospitals an hour away in Chicago. The federal government could provide that information to the public. It could put it in every public library. But neither President Reagan nor President Bush has done so. The same stonewalling characterized Congress's 1986 decision to deny patients access to a national data bank that collects records of malpractice judgments and disciplinary actions against doctors.

It should be obvious that the nexus of all this trouble is money. Maniacally overbuilt in response to the promise of guaranteed Medicare revenues, then left with excess capacity in the wake of mandated cost controls, hospitals are now struggling to make up the difference by fighting one another for patients and by pushing high-end elective surgeries and contrived substance abuse and "health-enhancement" programs, while discharging nonessential staff and overworking and underpaying those who remain—not the indicators of an industry in good shape. (One of the few scams Bogdanich doesn't mention is the overtransfusion of blood, which costs the patient $400 a unit. It's a hard one to spot, because nobody can fault the surgeon for transfusing a couple of extra units on the ground that "I had to keep the patient's vascular volume up." But human blood, which is perishable, comes to hospitals on a "use it or lose it" basis, and those units, which were donated for free by civic-minded citizens, represent pure profit for the hospitals and the blood bankers.)

Health to pay

So doesn't it follow that the solution to the health-care mess is simply more money? Yes, because anyone can see that more resources are urgently required, even though it's not clear how or on what that money should be spent. Although the book he has written leads there inevitably, the question of how the health-care problem might be solved is not addressed by Bogdanich except in passing, as when he suggests replacing the current conglomeration of competing and conflicting health-care policies with one coherent national policy.

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But why should Bogdanich have a solution to offer when no one else does? It seems quite enough that he has provided us with an illumination of the problem. The health-care crisis is only going to compound itself as my generation of baby-boomers moves along the wellness curve toward coronary artery disease and colon cancer. Perhaps there is no solution. Perhaps we will have to accept that, just as the drug epidemic and other problems appear to be insoluble, we simply will have to become accustomed to living in a nation where decent health care is available only to the very, very rich. But it does seem unfortunate that the nation that has the best physician training in the world and is the clear world leader in biomedical research should be unable to translate those accomplishments into affordable, first-rate health care for all of its citizens. □

Without Fear or Females

The New York Times's *girl trouble*

by Marjorie Williams

Nan Robertson's disappointed love for *The New York Times** dates back to 1955, when she was hired to work for the "women's page" way up on the ninth floor—one of the few reporting jobs open to a young woman at the *Times* in 1955.

Those who passed through the ninth floor, including women who bore such later-famous bylines as Gloria Emerson and Charlotte Curtis, lived in a different ethical universe from the men who labored in the city room six floors below. "Fashion was New York City's most important advertising industry," Robertson writes. "We were never allowed to forget it." She and her colleagues were expected to produce burbling "news" stories about major retailers in precise proportion to each store's advertising outlay at the *Times*—a practice rigorously policed, down to the column inch, by the paper's advertising director.

It was, among other things, a perfect sign of the paper's contempt toward its women employees. Men took care of delivering the news without fear or favor, while women were delegated the dirty job of bringing in the cash.

Robertson eventually made her way down to the third floor and later to the Washington and Paris bureaus. But her work on the women's page was only one of many humiliating experiences in what she describes as an almost unrelieved history of piggery at America's most important newspaper.

Marjorie Williams is a Washington writer and a contributing editor of Vanity Fair.

* *The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men, and* The New York Times. Nan Robertson. *Random House, $22.*

Early and late, ambitious women have been shocked to learn that journalism harbors as much sexism as the next trade. Vested power is at stake; discrimination against latecomers is the rule. Even so, Robertson argues, the *Times* has a long history of unusual hostility to women: "Look back on the landscape of 19th and early 20th century journalism," she writes:

> Nowhere is it emptier of women than on *The New York Times*. While Nellie Bly (the pen name for Elizabeth Cochrane) was whizzing around the planet in 72 days or locking herself into insane asylums to do front-page stories for Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*; while Rheta Childe Dorr was going off to the Russian Revolution for *The New York Mail*; while William Randolph Hearst of the Hearst chain and Roy Howard of the Scripps-Howard chain and Joseph Patterson of *The New York Daily News* and Colonel Robert McCormick of *The Chicago Tribune* were pushing their women stars, *The New York Times* stood fast against what it was sure was the weaker sex.

Adolph Ochs, publisher from 1896 to 1935, was frankly opposed to hiring any women at all, and editorialized against female suffrage. Even during World War II, when the man shortage dramatically broadened women's opportunities at other newspapers—and when the more tolerant Arthur Hays Sulzberger had taken over—*The New York Times* stood fast against hiring women replacements when male reporters were called up.

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It wasn't until the late fifties and early sixties that women began to crack the city room in any numbers. They were greeted with, at best, a tolerant condescension.

In some of the book's best passages, Robertson details the *Times*'s bland sexism toward even its most successful female reporters and its disregard for all the obstacles they had to hurdle simply to get their jobs done. In 1963, for example, when the recently anointed publisher Punch Sulzberger came down to meet the Washington bureau staff, bureau chief James Reston happily took the entire group to the Metropolitan Club—excepting, of course, the bureau's three female reporters, one of whom was Robertson, who weren't allowed in the club's dining room.

Another of the three, Marjorie Hunter, complained to Reston one day about the indignity that gives this book its title—the National Press Club's policy that women were permitted to cover the club's prestigious newsmaker luncheons only from the cramped, hot balcony of the room, while their male colleagues took notes and ate lunch in comfort below. Reston's response, writes Robertson, was to turn to a male colleague and ask "with an air of innocent wonderment, 'What's wrong with Maggie?'" When the bureau's three women resolved to boycott these assignments, Robertson remembers, Reston "was not only baffled by the fuss, he was quietly furious."

Casual slights were routine. Dan Schwarz, the Sunday editor, once wrote to a colleague who had recommended a young woman for a job, "What does she look like? Twiggy? Lynn Redgrave? Perhaps you ought to send over her vital statistics, or picture in a bikini?" A *Times* personnel director ended his otherwise glowing performance review of a woman mail clerk with the notation, "Weak points: May lack education, and may overdress."

These memoranda, which came to light as a result of a class-action lawsuit filed in 1974, merely provided written evidence of an attitude already amply displayed by women's salaries and slow career ascents. In the early seventies, empowered by the women's movement, female reporters who had begun to organize learned from their union's payroll records that they probably had a good case against the paper.

The core of Robertson's book is an account of the lawsuit, *Boylan* v. *The New York Times*, which was settled in 1978, before it went to trial, on terms that enabled both sides to claim partial victory—but that unquestionably cautioned the *Times* to do better by its women. In many ways, it's a drama typical of its time: How shocked these women were to realize, after months and years of reasoned negotiation, that the guys still held all the cards and had little intention of sharing them. How shocked these men were to learn that their protestations of good will and affectionate paternalism were not enough to keep the women content.

Columnist manifesto

The lawsuit, related in voluminous detail, is in some ways the least compelling part of the book. Regrettably, the author has her own myopia where the *Times* is concerned. She has spent almost all of her career there, and it is an act of bravery for her to criticize so harshly an institution she clearly loves. But there's an annoying inside-baseball quality to the book, whose every page seems subtly colored by the assumption that *anything* on the subject of *The New York Times* is interesting.

Robertson fails her material in two ways. She never addresses whether her perceptions of the *Times* might apply to some larger world. Where a more objective writer might conclude that the *Times* was (and is) quite typical in its behavior toward women, Robertson sees a magnificent institution that shockingly failed, in this one area, to meet its vaunted ideals. She insists on seeing the *Times* as special, and never effectively explains why anyone who doesn't

Avital Ronell

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draw a *Times* paycheck should care about what really boil down to personnel squabbles.

The most compelling reason, of course, is the news itself: How does the *Times*'s treatment of women affect the world view presented by the paper? Robertson never tells.

Even more disappointing is the way she breezes past the major dilemma that now faces women in any newsroom: the sexual stereotyping of assignments. Today women have more than a token presence on the traditionally "male beats," but it's far less than parity (check out a press conference at the Pentagon or the State Department if you doubt that there are still male beats). A more confounding problem, though, is the existence of women's beats.

As long as it's up to women to cover stories like abortion, sexual harassment, and education, these subjects will be defined as "women's stories," and women who write about them will be perceived as limited reporters.

Almost any female reporter is aware of her editors' tacit assumption that women should be the ones to assure good coverage of "women's issues," defined in many newsrooms to include abortion, rape, child care and early childhood education, sexual harassment, the feminization of poverty, and more. Often, women reporters are subtly charged with the responsibility of alerting their predominantly male editors to these stories. The message is, *Okay, gals, if you say this stuff is important, we'll go with it.*

Robertson at times seems to accept the idea that it falls to women to bring a different "voice" to the news. She approvingly paraphrases a male editor who has a good track record in hiring women: "Whereas some men on the national staff tended to pass over or downplay such subjects as birth control or toxic shock, [he said,] the women would say, 'Wait a minute—this is a hell of a story.' "

Interestingly, this is one of the few areas in which newsroom managers suspend their quaint belief that all of their reporters are, and should be, devoid of personal feeling in any matter they cover. Surely there is some unexamined sexism in editors' allowance of a different standard for women: shades of the ninth floor, circa 1955.

The problem is a tough one for women (and, in very similar forms, for other minority reporters hired to mix up the white-male makeup of newsrooms). On the one hand, good reporters often produce their best work by pursuing questions that strike some personal chord. Robertson, for one, won a Pulitzer prize for her account of her own dreadful bout with toxic shock syndrome. And often, women reporters do care deeply that these issues get serious coverage by their papers. *What the hell, I'll do it myself* is sometimes the most rational response to an editorial ethic that defines news too narrowly.

On the other hand, there is a big difference between a paper tolerating coverage of these issues and taking that coverage seriously. There is something of a vicious cycle at work here: As long as it's up to women to spot and cover these stories, these subjects will continue to be defined as "women's stories," and women who write about them will be perceived as limited reporters. As long as male editors assume that the talented women on their staffs are there to alert them to "women's stories," those editors will never give appropriate weight to either the women or the stories.

To be sure, men and women often see things differently. If Anita Hill taught us nothing else, she showed how thoroughly divided men and women remain in some dimensions of life. Sometimes the best an editor can do is solicit coverage from someone who understands a story better than he does. But journalists should at least aim to have access to a universal language, and to achieve the imaginative empathy that ideally enables a man to write persuasively of sexual harassment and a woman to write realistically of combat.

Times fables

Robertson's bias on this issue—an unconscious one, I suspect—shows in her discussion of women who now work at the *Times*. As a sign of women's progress, she points to Anna Quindlen, only the third woman ever to have her own column on the *Times* op-ed page. While making much of Quindlen, she only briefly mentions the Washington bureau's stellar Maureen Dowd—who is, to my mind, a far more important exemplar of change at the *Times*. I like Quindlen's work, especially the more personal columns she wrote in her last incarnation, as the author of "In the Thirties." But even on the op-ed page, she tends to stay within the safe harbor of "women's issues." Don't get me wrong: She does what she does better than almost anyone else who does it, and hers is a valuable presence in the *Times*. But Quindlen doesn't seem to pose much challenge to the tradition that assigns men the real power within newspapers.

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Dowd, on the other hand, has commanded more traditionally male territory, including politics and the White House. At her best, she's used the privilege of covering these areas to see things no one else does and express them in original (and often wicked) ways. Some of her style is related to gender, I think, and some of it is not; the heartening thing is that the *Times* values so highly a woman who covers this turf with such originality.

Robertson concludes that the *Times* today is far fairer to women than it was before the women's movement began, but remains far less fair than it thinks it is. In this, too, the *Times* strikes me as typical. As one unnamed female editor puts it, "The men running the *Times* now truly do not believe themselves capable of sexist feelings. They have serious wives. They help with the dishes. But they are still looking for, and are only comfortable with, people in their own image—in other words, other white men. They have a joking camaraderie together that rules us out."

Two steps forward, one step back. The *Times*'s ethos today is embodied in Arthur O. "Pinch" Sulzberger Jr., the 40-year-old who succeeded his father as publisher in mid-January. He so prides himself on his enlightenment, Robertson tells us, that he keeps in his desk drawer a typed page of excerpts from Marilyn French's book, *Beyond Power*. After Quindlen wrote an op-ed page piece excoriating her employer for its sleazy article naming the woman who charged William Kennedy Smith had raped her, Pinch made a point of embracing her in the newsroom for all the troops to see.

In the fall of 1990, he described to one of the newsroom's top female managers, Penny Abernathy, his vision of how the *Times* would change with the times. "I want to leave my son a different newspaper from the one I'm inheriting," he said.

Abernathy was thrilled. It wasn't until she left his office and related the conversation to her own (female) boss that she realized what was wrong with Pinch's democratic vow: Sulzberger, her boss reminded her, also has a daughter. □

The Coward and the Glory

How the Chairman of the Board toadied to the top of the establishment

by Evan Thomas

He was, in Richard Rovere's famous characterization, "The Chairman of the Board of the American Establishment." John J. McCloy was chairman also of the Council on Foreign Relations as well as Chase Bank (the Rockefellers' bank), president of the World Bank during the Marshall Plan era, the American proconsul who rebuilt Germany after the war (traveling about in a private train that had belonged to Hitler), the Wall Street lawyer to the Seven Sisters oil companies during the sixties and seventies, and a kind of Grand Vizier to Cold War presidents from Truman to Nixon. In 1965, in a memo to Lyndon Johnson entitled "Backing from the Establishment," National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy wrote, "The key to these men is McCloy."

For all that, he was surprisingly humble. McCloy was a modest man from modest circumstances. His mother "did heads," he liked to say; she was a hairdresser to Philadelphia society matrons. As a boy, hat in hand, McCloy knocked on doors in the WASP oasis of Northeast Harbor, Maine, offering to do chores for the summer magnates. Even after he became the establishment's all-purpose chairman, he remained self-effacing. His motto was to "run with the swift" in the hopes that one day he would "finish second."

Self-effacement is often a WASP affectation, a subtle reminder that modesty best befits greatness. But McCloy was genuinely humble. In many ways, his Horatio Alger story is admirable, even heartwarming: the poor boy who came to embody the American meritocracy without succumbing to hubris along the way.

Yet one wonders, reading this thorough, careful, and overly long biography of McCloy*, whether our hero wasn't a bit *too* humble—at least toward his

Evan Thomas is the Newsweek *Washington bureau chief and coauthor of* The Wise Men.

* *The Chairman: John J. McCloy: The Making of the American Establishment.* Kai Bird. *Simon & Schuster, $27.50.*

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perceived betters. McCloy became known as a great statesman. But, judging from the evidence provided by Bird, he remained at heart a chore boy, tipping his forelock to Mr. Rockefeller as he asked for the tip. His cheerful countenance always seemed to aim up at his betters—never down, the direction from which he came.

As a student at Amherst College and Harvard Law School, McCloy was a grind who plodded rather than shined. He was in his career a doer, not a thinker. The most revealing testament to his conceptual abilities were the Godkin lectures he delivered at Harvard in 1953, just as the Cold War was locking in. The lectures made no attempt to ask why; they were merely concerned with the process—how to make the bureaucracy work better to face off against the Soviet Union. Organizing for victory was McCloy's strength. He could sit at a conference table with a roomful of feuding government officials and amiably but firmly prod them into consensus. McCloy called it "yellow padding." Busily jotting notes, he could resolve an impasse by breaking down the various arguments and fitting them back together in a design that suited everyone. Too often, however, he was less concerned with direction than with getting there.

As a lawyer, McCloy was particularly adept at skirting the law. Throughout World War II, he helped his boss, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, circumvent the various rules and regulations that stood in the way of mounting the war effort. At times, those bothersome rules included the Constitution. It was McCloy, more than any official, who guided and sanctioned the internment of Japanese Americans. He brushed aside the legal qualms of Attorney General Francis Biddle; the war effort came first, and in war, moral concerns become mere sentiment. Thus, McCloy refused to allow American bombers to blow up the rail heads at Auschwitz and Buchenwald. It was later estimated that a few bomber raids could have saved 100,000 Jews from the gas chambers. At the time, however, McCloy felt he could not afford to divert Allied airplanes from other targets.

In the years after the war, McCloy was bitterly criticized by Japanese and Jewish groups for his insensitivity; he was called by some, sotto voce, a racist and an anti-semite. This is in some ways too harsh a judgment. McCloy was not overtly bigoted. Rather, he tended to reflect the attitude of his class and time. Thus he felt obliged to advise a young lawyer attending a debutante ball in Washington during the war that he could bring some bachelor friends, but out of deference to the hostess, "no Jews, please."

McCloy could be blinkered, but he was not amoral. It was McCloy who argued, albeit unsuccessfully, to warn the Japanese before striking them with the atom bomb. McCloy regarded the bomb as a "primordial weapon" and, after the war, pushed, again vainly, for international control of the nuclear secret. The wartime devastation of Germany depressed him. Offered an armchair that had belonged to Eva Braun, Hitler's mistress, McCloy demurred. "I felt as if I were very much a looter," he recalled.

Philadelphia egos

McCloy could be principled; still, his moral sensitivities were a lot more likely to be aroused over the rights of the powerful than of the downtrodden. Believing, correctly, that Germany had to be rebuilt rather than permanently punished, McCloy as German High Commissioner released war criminals like the Krupps with an alacrity that some found unseemly. McCloy urged President Eisenhower to stand up to Senator Joe McCarthy, but the analogy he cited was revealing: He likened McCarthy's bullyboy tactics to those used by congressional investigators against Wall Street financiers in the thirties.

Bird presents these facts yet refrains from passing too many judgments. Rarely does he delve into McCloy's character; his personal life is barely mentioned. Rather, the author lays out his copious research in a clear and somewhat plodding fashion. The book reads like a long term paper McCloy might have written about himself. Bird does take McCloy to task for specific errors of judgment on the Nisei internment and on Vietnam, where McCloy allowed himself to be seduced by the military and LBJ despite initial misgivings about the war. But the larger questions about McCloy's life remain for the most part unexamined.

The same can be said about a book that I co-wrote in 1986, *The Wise Men*. In our group biography of a half-dozen pillars of the old foreign policy establishment, Walter Isaacson and I did not delve too deeply into McCloy's character and morality (and I should add that Bird's research is more thorough than ours). But reading anew about McCloy makes me want to explore questions that merely nagged at me when I was writing about him some years ago.

These questions arise most disturbingly in the overlap between McCloy's public career and his business career. McCloy seemed able to serve two masters, but his patrons, the Rockefellers, had a flinty-eyed view of whose interests came first. In explaining why he wanted to retain McCloy to advise him on an antitrust matter, John D. Rockefeller Jr. confided to a colleague that "McCloy knows so many people in government circles . . . he might be the way to get information from various quarters about the matter without seeking it or revealing his hand." At

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times, McCloy, the government servant, and McCloy, the Wall Street lawyer/dealmaker, seem indistinguishable. As chairman of Chase and then as senior partner of Milbank, Tweed, McCloy functioned as the de facto ambassador between major oil companies and the governments of both the United States and the Arab oil-producing nations. In this role, he was afforded extraordinary latitude. When he told President Kennedy that it was necessary for the oil companies to work together, the president picked up the phone and told the attorney general (Kennedy's brother, Robert) to grant McCloy a blanket exemption from the antitrust laws. After all, McCloy was a statesman, not a lawyer. As with General Motors, what was good for McCloy was good for America.

Or was it? It was, so long as McCloy helped to keep a steady stream of cheap oil flowing into the American economy. But when the interests of the oil companies and the United States diverged in the energy crises of the seventies, McCloy was left uncomfortably and unsuccessfully trying to referee. The nadir came when McCloy, along with Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller, badgered Jimmy Carter to grant asylum to the Shah of Iran in 1979. The president feared that the mullahs would seize American hostages as a result, but he caved in to McCloy's lobbying campaign on behalf of his client, the Shah—whose country had $6 billion in deposits in McCloy's bank, Chase. Two weeks later the hostage crisis began.

McCloy never accepted responsibility for this tragedy, or earlier ones that occurred on his watch, like the Nisei internment. Confronted by reporters when the issue of Japanese-American reparations came up in the mid-eighties, McCloy protested. "I was just a leg man," he said. Precisely. □

The Washington Monthly JOURNALISM AWARD

FOR NOVEMBER 1991 IS PRESENTED TO:

David Lewis and Mary Whittington
CNN Special Assignment Unit

When the supersecret National Program Office (NPO) was created in 1982, its purpose was to ensure that U.S. government leaders could survive a nuclear assault. But what the agency is truly committed to ensuring, CNN reported in "The Doomsday Government," is the preservation of its $8 billion budget. Take one example from the November 17 report: To keep cash flowing for a high-tech communications system that didn't actually work, NPO decided to put on a show for Congress. As Oz-like equipment whirred and blinked before the legislators, the messages it was supposedly conveying were actually sent by a legman dropping quarters in a nearby phone. When DODers tried to blow the whistle on that hoax and other security gaffes, they faced nasty internal retaliation (which, like wasteful spending, also thrives in the dark).

Taxpayers spend about *$36 billion* a year supporting so-called "black" programs like NPO that use national security to resist even basic accountability. CNN's special shed enough light on one of them to make us more than a little nervous about the rest.

FOR DECEMBER 1991 IS PRESENTED TO:

Jeff Bailey
The Wall Street Journal

Down-and-out Mobile, Alabama, thought it was getting one hell of a deal when it agreed to allow Waste Management, Inc. (WMI) to use 620 acres on the edge of town as a trash dump in exchange for a $17,500 school air-conditioning system, a two-trailer community center, $5,000 in camp scholarships, and a rollicking Christmas party. But what the good folk of Mobile didn't know, Bailey points out in his December 3 story, "Economics of Trash," is that WMI will reap tens of millions from that dump while exposing thousands to potentially hazardous waste.

Bailey's tale of how corporations like WMI prey on poor communities exposes an issue that will only grow in relevance (and redolence) as tightening state and federal regulations force the closing of about half of the nation's landfills in the next few years. Though the solutions are not simple, Bailey finds a first step in Kentucky, where a new state law allows municipalities to take a percentage of the huge profits garbage companies glean while turning beggared communities into national trash cans.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to the best newspaper, magazine, television, or radio story (or series of stories) on our political system. Nominations for any newspaper, magazine, or radio or television station in the country are welcome. The subject can be government in its federal, state, or municipal manifestation. Please send nominations to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. Two copies of the article or broadcast text should accompany the nomination.

Nominations for stories published or aired in March will close April 15. The winner will be announced in the June issue.

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POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

The Lives of Norman Mailer. Carl Rollyson. *Paragon House, $26.95.* The temptation for most is to think of Norman Mailer as a sort of heroic flop: the last autodidact, if you will, the novelist as philosopher king—supreme arbiter and embodiment of the history, culture, and politics of his age. He is a boozing, brawling, womanizing, self-infatuated Balzac or Dostoyevsky for post-World War II America. In the kitchen of his Brooklyn Heights brownstone, writes biographer Rollyson (who has never been there), Mailer has a homemade photo montage of himself and Hemingway, previous American incumbent to the throne.

The immediate problem, of course, is that for all the millions of words Mailer has churned out since *The Naked and the Dead* made him an instant literary celebrity in 1948 at the age of 25, even so fervid an admirer as Rollyson is hard put to name one entirely successful work of fiction. From *The Deer Park* and *Barbary Shore* in the fifties (derided in *The New Yorker* for their "monolithic, flawless badness") to ponderous monstrosities like last fall's *Harlot's Ghost*, Mailer's novels often read like parodies for scores—and sometimes hundreds—of pages.

Has the man ever created a protagonist who wasn't essentially a fantasy version of his already fantastic public persona? It's hard to think of one. Has he ever created a female character who was anything but a collection of orifices or a punching bag? Can't think of one. Has he added a phrase, image, or metaphor to the language? Not one. Ever told a story that can be summarized with a straight face? No. Is it possible to imagine weeping over a Mailer novel? Hardly. Laughing? Never.

So what's this all about? Why has Rollyson, who teaches art at the City University of New York, written the third biography of Mailer in 10 years (a mostly scissors and paste job—Rollyson himself never got an interview)? Why is *The Washington Monthly* bothering to review it? And why, dear reader, are you reading this fool thing?

Essentially because Mailer's one successful character is Mailer himself. Or, as Rollyson puts it close to the end of what is, for all one's skepticism, a fascinating book:

> What other American writer approaching 70 is still being asked to prove himself and has actually abetted the question? . . . For four decades, each new [Mailer] work has been greeted with great anticipation and skepticism. This has gone on so long that there will be no end to it until there is an end to Mailer.

Simple momentum accounts for part of the Mailer legend. Literary notoriety, once achieved, is harder to lose than other kinds. If Milli Vanilli wrote books, we'd be reading their confessions today. Once enough readers are persuaded (or bullied) into thinking an author is important, they tend to keep buying. Next to making it on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry, it's the surest meal ticket around.

Schmoozing has a lot to do with it, too. An indefatigable self-promoter, Mailer is the Madonna of American letters. That is, he became famous partly by acting famous. Judging by Rollyson's concise second- and third-hand accounts of Mailer's various friendships, feuds, marriages, love affairs, fist-fights, political campaigns, bad movies and assorted minor felonies, he can be charming, he can be a monster, and he can be an unmitigated clown. The only thing Mailer apparently can't be is dull. Sure, he's made an ass of himself on national TV—as Rollyson duly notes —but he also appeared there early and often.

Indeed, while Rollyson is coy about spelling it out, that's pretty much how he makes his case for Mailer's importance: as a literary performance artist, a Christo of the psyche, a rock star without a guitar. At this late date, anyway, that's pretty much the only case that *can* be made. Rollyson writes:

> To find his true identity, Mailer would have to murder that nice young man his mother had taken such pains to raise. She had indulged him, taken possession of him in such an absolute way that he would always be her boy. She had made him into a "tot of destiny," (to use [Robert] Linder's description of the psychopath's mother, who imbues her child with a grandiose self-image). Not finding a world co-extensive with his will, the child, as in Mailer's case, "acts out" in infantile ways, not having learned to cope with society at large.

Actually, Mailer's grandiosity, his often astonishing energy, mood swings, manic charm, occasional paranoia, history of drug and alcohol abuse, and violent outbursts suggest a different diagnosis altogether—one having nothing to do with the pseudo-Freudian humbug for which biographer and subject share a taste. Suffice it to say that both intellectually and imaginatively, Mailer was shaped by the fifties, that oft-maligned period extending from 1946 until roughly 1968—not coincidentally his own creative *annus mirabilus*. With political radicalism more or less a given for a would-be artist whose early models were John Dos Passos and James T. Farrell, Mailer's literary personality coalesced around the three great, and now mostly defunct, "-isms" of the period: existentialism, Marxism, and Freudianism.

Never a consistent thinker, Mailer tended toward highly idiosyncratic versions of all three. Anti-authoritarian to his core, he also had (and has) a formidable appetite for power that kept him more or less constantly at war with himself. What may have been Mailer's philosophical nadir was

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the infamous essay "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster" in the 1957 book *Advertisements for Myself*. "The psychopath murders—if he has the courage," he argued, "out of the necessity to purge his violence, for if he cannot empty his hatred then he cannot love." Two 18-year-old punks who beat to death a candy store owner, therefore, cannot be called cowards, "for one murders not only a weak 50-year-old man but an institution as well, one violates private property, one enters into a new relation with the police." (Mailer treats "Negro" and "psychopath," as synonyms throughout, although he uses the latter as a term of praise.)

If morally grotesque, Mailer's ruminations also proved grotesquely prophetic. He was at his best during the great coming-apart of the late sixties, when his personal nuttiness and the nation's briefly became one. Driven by alimony and child-support payments, Mailer was forced to put fiction aside for a time for what he regarded as mere journalism—producing under terrific deadline pressure his two best books, *The Armies of the Night* and *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*.

Unfortunately, Mailer seems never to have given himself enough credit for what he accomplished in those books. Either that or he never again found the right topic. Still motivated, Rollyson shows, by the need to support himself, five wives, and eight children, his subsequent nonfiction books became as blowsy and self-indulgent as the worst of his novels. The arguable exception, *The Executioner's Song*, a 1,000-plus-page "nonfiction novel" about Utah murderer Gary Gilmore, turns out to have an odd pedigree indeed. Rollyson's account of the book's genesis makes it clear that most of the research—including all of the interviews with Gilmore himself—were done by Mailer's friend Larry Schindler. A researcher named Jere Herzenberg appears to have done the organizing and outlining. Maybe that's part of the reason the book reads like nothing Mailer's written before or since.

The moral incoherence of the book, however, is reflective of Mailer's lifelong, naive obsession with violence. He devotes a few hundred words of Dick and Jane to the victims and hundreds of thousands to the creep.

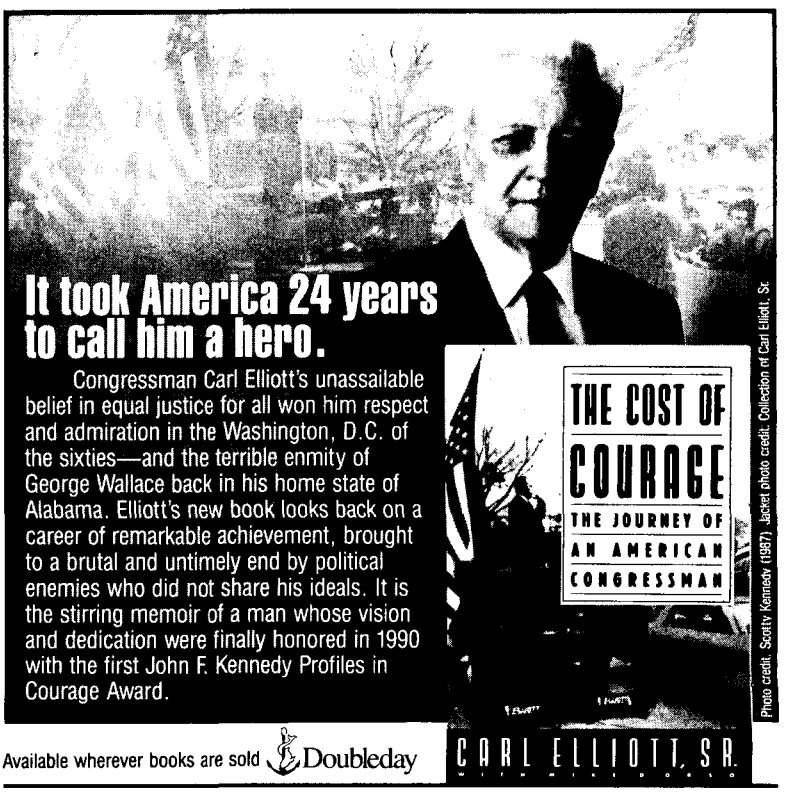
In retrospect, it wasn't surprising that Mailer got taken for a ride by a murderer with a fancy prose style. Nor that the New York press delighted in ripping the author to shreds after his protege, jailhouse author Jack Abbott, knifed a young waiter to death on the eve of his own book's publication in 1981. Mailer had spent a lifetime asking for it. "If Abbot played Mailer like a violin," Rollyson comments shrewdly, "it was because Mailer had taught him to use the instrument."

It's hard for a man Mailer's age to impersonate a rebel, much less a sexual outlaw, in the age of Axl Rose, Madonna, and AIDS. The mass-market cult of MTV has made it all seem a bit passé anyway—just so much play-acting with disastrous personal and cultural consequences. Even so, Mailer remains a fascinating and enigmatic figure in spite of himself. There may even be a way for him to achieve the literary immortality he seeks. Mailer's unexpurgated autobiography could yet make him the Samuel Pepys of his age. If only his publisher could bribe him away from those God-awful novels.

—*Gene Lyons*

The Dispossessed: America's Underclasses from the Civil War to the Present. Jacqueline Jones. *Basic, $25*. "Poverty has a history," writes Jones in her sweeping examination of poverty and its handmaiden, landlessness, in the United States. Poverty also has a color and a place. Today, most Americans would tell you that color is black and that place is the urban North, a broadly conceived territory that embraces not only Philadelphia, New York, and Trenton, but also Chicago, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. They'd be wrong.

Poverty in America is not mostly urban: A majority of the poor live outside central cities. Poverty is also white: In 1990, poor whites outnumbered poor blacks two to one, and black recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children were a minority. Poverty is also southern: The South has more poor than the



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Northeast and Midwest combined. Yet, Jones charges, Americans persist in directing their pity and fear at the urban black "underclass," a monster largely of their own imagination.

In this stoutly ideological work, Jones aims to explain who the poor are, and how they got there. By locating the origins of the black underclass in the upheavals wrought by the Civil War and by highlighting other poor groups such as laid-off whites and Mexican migrants, she aims to urge America toward a "class-based" politics instead of one that is founded on race.

These are ambitious goals, and they make for tough going. This book sometimes seems as interminable as injustice itself. Yet thanks to the breadth of Jones's scholarship, it is full of revelations—chief among them its examination of why poor blacks and whites have been unable to forge a permanent coalition based on their considerable collective interests.

The book starts by focusing on the primacy of land in American politics, beginning with the period immediately following the Civil War, a time when patterns of land ownership could have changed drastically but didn't.

Instead of handing freed blacks 40 acres and a mule, the federal government gave in to southern Democrats and returned most confiscated land to its original white owners. Up from slavery, blacks became sharecroppers —dependent on whites for housing, land, food, even farm tools, and physically proscribed by Jim Crow laws, Klan-type terrorism, and an annual contract system that kept cash out of their hands.

At the same time that blacks' movement was limited, it was also compelled. The bulk of the book is devoted to a study of "shifting": poor folks' habit of packing up and leaving one plantation for another in the vague hope that things might be better down the road. White landowners attributed shifting to unreliability—"niggers rove from place to place," sniffed one Texas cotton planter—but Jones strongly insists that to shift was not to be shiftless. Shifting, she argues, showed that croppers were industrious, doggedly independent, even idealistic.

Shifting, however, proved futile. Rarely did sharecroppers acquire land or even a measure of independence. By 1930, more than 60 years after Emancipation, 80 percent of all black farmers were still working somebody else's land. This, Jones says, led to the ultimate shift: the Great Migration of southern blacks to the cities of the North. But even there they were confined to the worst jobs, the worst schools, and the worst neighborhoods; racial covenants took the place of pass laws, and, Jones says, the ghetto took the place of the plantation.

But blacks weren't the only ones dispossessed and displaced by the war. "The story of the South's small farm owners in the late 19th century represents the intersection of the freedpeople's climb out of slavery and the poor whites' descent into tenancy," points out Jones.

The poor white man is crucial to Jones's argument. Ubiquitous yet ignored (in *Dixie's Forgotten People*, J. Wayne Flint calls him "the invisible poor"), the poor white offers sad proof that blacks had no monopoly on poverty. Even before the Civil War, whites were pushed onto the South's least fertile sand flats and clay hills, and deprived by slavery of a host of wage-earning jobs. It remains one of the great paradoxes of the war that these slaveless whites fought and died for a system that oppressed them rather than banding together with blacks against the planters; that paradox is intimately related to the questions posed by Jones in her book.

Increasingly, Jones writes, the relationship between poor and wealthy whites was not neighborly, but contractual. While blacks became sharecroppers, whites became tenant farmers who were viewed as mildly superior to blacks, but not by much. Here Jones begins her examination of the countless ways in which white labor was pitted against black. If subtle competition existed between the two groups before the war, it was the postwar economy that brought them face to face in the labor market. To their chagrin, whites often were subject to the same restrictions as blacks: When a white landowner declared that he didn't want "pistol carriers," "professional crap shooters," "quarrelsome men," or preachers on his plantation, he wasn't just talking about blacks.

Whites usually came out ahead—particularly when they moved off the farm to take wage jobs in phosphate mines, lumber camps, textile mills, and turpentine stills. At the Prairie Pebble Company, only blacks found their paychecks docked for "medical insurance." In lumber camps, blacks performed the heaviest work but were not allowed to cut railroad ties: "It is not well," explained one owner, "to encourage them to use the broadax."

Yet shoddy treatment of blacks often led to the same for whites. On plantations, abuse of blacks lowered wages and standards for both races. The same held true in the industrial sector. Frequently imprisoned for crimes real and invented, black convicts were rented out—cheaply—to do mining and construction work. "Some of the bitterest strikes in southern history," Jones points out, "pitted free men against convicted coal miners."

And if blacks were prevented from voting by literacy clauses and poll taxes, so were poor whites—who, Jones estimates, lost 25 percent of their voting power this way. (Whites were also lynched, though Jones does not mention this.) Whites, too, were subject to "transportation charges" that plunged them into debt before they reached a work site. In 1940, a rural sociologist wrote, "The labor problems of the two races have more or less converged."

It's no surprise, then, that whites also fled north—though, Jones points out, their move "lacked the political and moral urgency that elevated black migration to the level of myth and allegory." Jones traces their route from the hollows of West Virginia and Kentucky to Ohio industrial towns, quoting one woman who described what they were after: "Our own land . . . where we can keep every bite we raise an' don't have to be a moven ever' year." Yet they, too, found themselves mocked and reviled. Alongside signs saying "no colored" were those that said "no Southerners."

Throughout this ugly history, why didn't blacks and whites turn on their employers? Jones never fully answers this question, though she documents abortive efforts. One was the Populist Party of the 1890s, which briefly unit-

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ed black and white small farmers. The longest-lived efforts she cites came from the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Jones blames the lasting failure of these initiatives on two factors: the declining power of labor unions, and white America's abiding belief in the "otherness" of the black poor—its conviction that poor blacks are a subculture unto themselves. Yet her analysis seems incomplete and a little unclear, as is her conclusion that what America needs, now more than ever, is a politics based not on race but on class.

There may be merit to this argument, but Jones does not name her enemy. When she deplores a "prevalence of racial politics" in America today, is she referring to the David Dukes or the Louis Farrakhans? Or both? When she proposes a class-based politics, is she arguing for a Rainbow Coalition—or siding with conservatives who would make college scholarships and affirmative action programs dependent on class? The distinction is an important one, and she does not make it.

Besides which, Jones's scholarship seems to be at odds with her argument: Considering their history of ill-will and enforced competition, how easy will it be for poor blacks and poor whites to unite? She herself shows that whites have usually found it easier to hoist themselves out of poverty; given this, are we to ignore the lingering impact of race—and racism—entirely? Surely not.

"As for lynching," said one 19th-century Georgia populist, "I am opposed to it except in extreme cases." As long as this ambivalence lives on in whites, it's hard to envision a just politics (or policy) that discounts race. Perhaps Jones would agree. It's hard to know. One thing, however, is for sure: If there remains anyone who believes in the universal accessibility of the American dream, this book will serve as a powerful tonic.

—Liza Mundy

The Rise of Selfishness in America. James Lincoln Collier. *Oxford, $24.95.* How did a prudish, hard-working, God-fearing country become, in a mere half-century or so, a republic of hedonists and narcissists addicted to drugs, alcohol, television, sports, vacations, gossip, fast cars, and slow work? Two ways, according to James Lincoln Collier: gradually and then suddenly. Like Virginia Woolf, Collier thinks that human character changed sometime around December 1910, although in the case of the American character he comes up with a pivotal year of 1912 by factoring in such events as Freud's lectures at Clark University in 1909 and the 1913 Armory Show in New York. From this moment on, Collier traces the demise of Victorian morality as embodied in such ideals as conformity to community standards, self-denial, temperance, and the work ethic. After sketching pastoral, pre-industrial Jeffersonian America, he goes on to document, through the rise of the city and waves of immigration, a broad, slow movement "towards increasing permissiveness in sexuality, wider acceptance of the consumption of alcohol as a human norm, greater involvement with the entertainment media, and in general, a continued insistence on the primacy of the self. By contrast, in the early seventies there was a swing politically to the right, the ending of post-war prosperity, and a dramatic upward surge in

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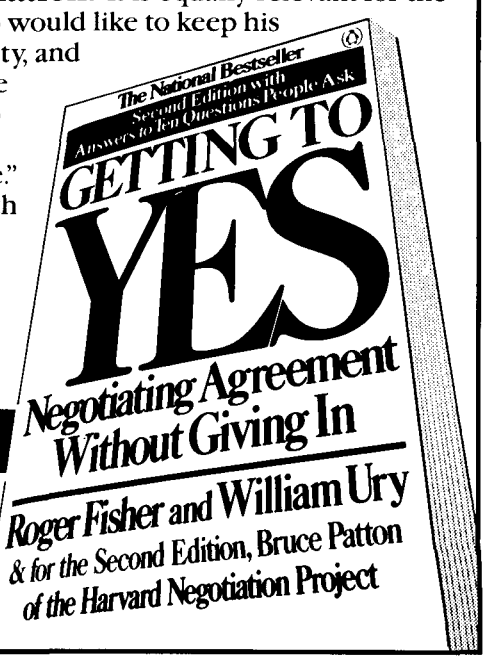

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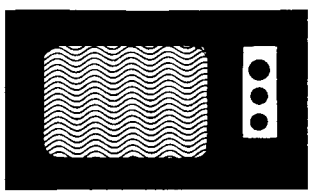

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selfishness which very quickly became so gross as to effect a qualitative change in American life."

The sudden acceleration of self-interest putatively occurred in 1973, signaled by the first appearance of pubic hair in *Playboy* (Marilyn Chambers in the tub, in a pose that hinted at autoeroticism—two taboos for the price of one). Collier's date is actually not as arbitrary as it seems: He marshals a good deal of data to support the notion that the social, sexual, and pharmacological revolutions of hip sixties youth were adopted by the masses in the seventies. Certainly, by the mid-seventies, the midwestern construction worker who was beating up hippies in '68 had grown his hair out, donned bell bottoms, and started smoking Kalamazoo Gold on his lunch break.

The date also suggests that even though the Republican dynasty established by Nixon seemed to signal a recrudescence of "traditional values," the ethic of selfishness was merely hiding out. When the time was right, it hopped into its BMW and went into fifth gear under former actor Ronald Reagan, a divorcé ostensibly committed to religion and family who neither attended church nor doted on his offspring.

A Kinsey Institute study completed in 1970 concluded, "Our data have shown that patterns of sexual morality in 1970 tended to be quite conservative. The findings do not support the contention that a sexual revolution . . . is now occurring in the United States." About half of surveyed Americans at that time believed that premarital sex was wrong under any circumstances. Now, of course, only Pat Buchanan and Pat Boone cling to such a belief. Meanwhile, another study found cocaine and marijuana use doubled among 12- to 17-year-olds between 1972 and 1974.

Collier attributes the triumph of the sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll ethic in part to the prosperity that followed World War II. The dog licks his genitals, in other words, because he can. He also blames television, the human-potential movement, and the sapping of American morale in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate.

A blend of social, cultural, and economic history, *The Rise of Selfishness* reads like a kind of mournful survey of the triumph of modernism, a sort of inverse replay of one's introductory liberal arts courses where the heroes —see Joyce shatter the tyranny of Edwardian social conventions and Victorian narrative conventions—are cast as unwitting villains, contributors to the decline and fall of the American character. In his broad survey of the fine and popular arts, Collier occasionally and understandably forgets which side he's on, exulting, at one point, at the way in which Manet's blatant *Olympia* "ripped the skin from Victorian prurience." An authority on the history of jazz, he is more illuminating on the development of popular music and dance than he is on literature and the visual arts.

If Collier sounds vague at some points, criminally obvious at others, and frequently like an Ayn Randian reactionary, he reveals himself in the final chapter to be a disciple not only of Jefferson but also of John Kenneth Galbraith. He idealizes the small, rural villages of the last century, with their communal ethic, and wonders how we might begin again to put the public good ahead of the private. Like Galbraith in *The Affluent Society*, he calls for a more active government and a far higher ratio of public spending to private consumption.

> The money is there for cleaner air, more reliable subways, larger drug rehabilitation programs, and all the rest of it—if we want these things. But we will have to give up something to get them. It is a very simple equation: Parents who vote for candidates who promise to hold down taxes are ensuring that their children will have available to them a rich smorgasbord of drugs to choose from. Big city dwellers who vote for such candidates are making it certain that murderers will be released back onto the streets from overcrowded prisons. Suburbanites who vote down town budgets . . . are guaranteeing that the problems of the inner cities which they fled will presently come out of the ghettos and camp on their doorsteps."

Harsh words indeed. Fortunately the rest of us can't hear because we're watching "Monday Night Football" or "Entertainment Tonight."

—*Jay McInerney*

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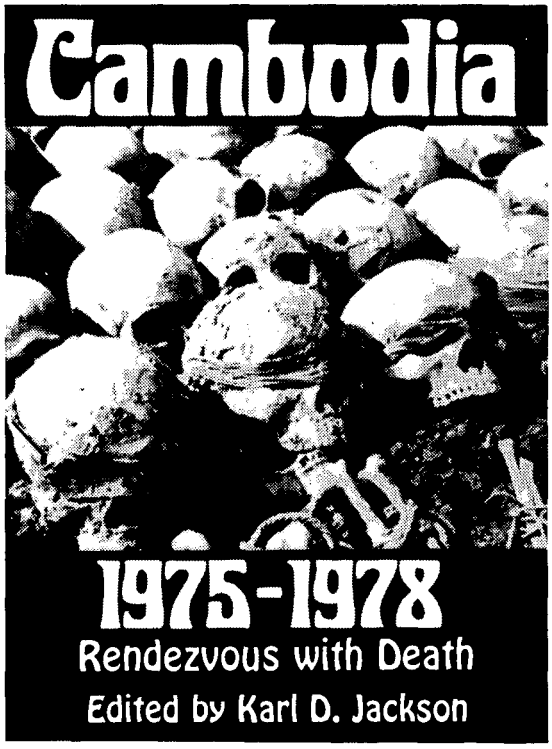

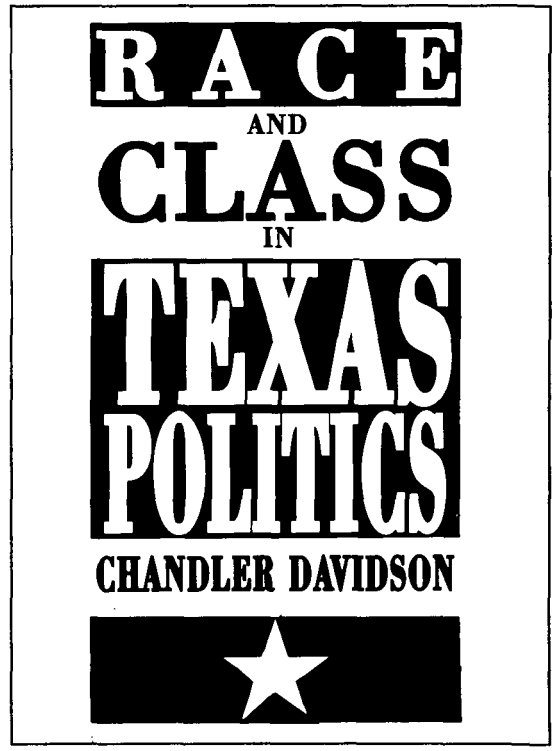

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